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CRISIS AND DISSOLUTION IN A BRAZILIAN FAMILY:

A STUDY OF DESTRUCTIVE ROLE ENACTMENTS

By

Donn Alan Williams

B.Ph., Thomas Jefferson College, 1975

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

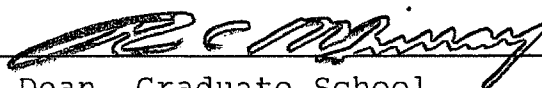
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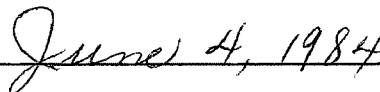
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Crisis and Dissolution in a Brazilian Family: A Study
in Destructive Role Enactments (134 pp.)

Director: Francis Bessac *FB.*

The problem was to explore the dynamics of the interrelationships among five members of a Brazilian family. The researcher collected the data over an eight year period using participant observation during field trips to Brazil, taped interviews, translations of letters, and the collection of the family history. The data were organized into two general areas, conjugal conflict and generation conflict, and then analyzed using content and thematic analyses. Role theory was also used to examine the participants' interactions. The concept of a "matrilineage of heroism" was employed to explore the conjugal and generation conflicts. It was concluded that destructive role enactments arising from the existence of two disparate role models, the patriarchal and the "matrilineage of heroism," within the parents' conceptions of their roles were substantially responsible for the crisis and dissolution of the family.

This study is respectfully
dedicated to the participants
who shared parts of their
lives with me. Hopefully
our efforts will contribute
to a better understanding of
the Brazilian family.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of the study was to explore the dynamics of the personal interrelationships among the five members of a middle-class Brazilian family. At the beginning of the study, the family was going through two critical experiences, common to families in general. The first was the passage of the mother and father, who are viewed as the primary dyad in the family, into their late middle years. Conjugal problems were becoming crucial to the survival of the marriage. Second, generation conflict had developed as the three children grew to early adulthood. The mother, especially, faced severe difficulties in accomplishing this transition. She became the central figure in the study of the family, because her intense, dominating personality and her traditional conception of her role as mother, strongly influenced all of their lives. It was important to the particular context of this family that she came from a long line of women who had struggled to raise their families without the support of their husbands. She carried on the tradition of a heroic role for the mother in the family, in spite of the fact that her husband was present.

Therefore, as the investigation proceeded it focused on two areas. The first, conjugal conflict, was seen as the primary engine of the evolution and development of the relationships as the family passed through crisis to dissolution. Generation conflict was also viewed as a highly influential set of factors which contributed to the total phenomenon. These areas were used as organizing constructs. Their relationships to broad, contextual, and societal realities will be discussed in the results and conclusion of the study.

The purpose of the research was to understand more clearly the inner workings of this particular family in order to gain insights and understanding of it which may be useful in any attempt to understand the middle-class Brazilian family as it exists today. The fast-paced changes in Brazil due to population growth and the attempt to industrialize increasingly larger sectors of society, among other factors, have had significant effects on the family. As Carlos Alberto de Medina points out in a work on the changing family:

There isn't doubt that the institution of the family is considered, in common sense terms, to be going through a period of crisis. This can be understood in several ways. Be it as generation conflict, be it as disintegration of the normative setting in which it finds itself, be it as alteration of its structure, be it as a tendency to disappear as a socializing institution. From this perspective

new studies need to be based upon a picture of the family and its characteristics so as to effectively understand which of its aspects are changing, transforming (1974: 82).

This study hoped to add to the knowledge about the current crisis in the Brazilian family. The data of the study did indeed provide some insights about the nature of the changes in Brazilian family life as illustrated in this particular case. These will be discussed in the conclusion.

The approach to understanding the meaning of these people's lives and the rise and decline of their family is based on the idea that the quality of the behaviors of the actors towards each other and their self-concept may be understood through the use of role theory. The idea was advanced that destructive role enactments could change a supposedly constructive action to one which would not have its intended effect, and which would create conditions where actors would mutually reinforce perceptions and actions which would weaken family bonds. An important insight into the role of the mother in a family such as this where the person is such a strong, dominating personality and where there is a long tradition of the mother being the leader, was offered by Professor Francis Bessac in his description of the term the "matrilineage of heroism." This means

the characteristic actions of a mother who sees herself as carrying on, out of necessity, heroically sacrificing herself for the good of her children. She is following the ideal role model of the women in her family who have gone before her. According to Professor Bessac, the conditions for the development of women who conceive of their roles in this way are linked to the following conditions:

1. The existence of a patrilineally skewed society, i.e., the man is supposed to be the breadwinner and the head of the household.
2. Several generations of strong women, related matrilineally, have exercised power without recognition.
3. These women are convinced that they are responsible for maintaining their conjugal family.
4. For this purpose, they see themselves as martyrs and often act this out (Bessac: 1982).

CHAPTER I

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Design

The design consisted of a field-based, highly contextual endeavor carried out by a single researcher using participant observation to gather data over a period of eight years. The findings were reported in a qualitative manner in the form of translations of letters, and protocols of interviews. These were later analyzed and interpreted in the light of anthropological concepts and theories. Conclusions and implications were then developed from these materials.

Method

Data Collection

In order to collect the data I employed the following means: First, participant observation during an initial period of residence in 1977 with the family for six months, followed by two other visits in 1980 and 1982. A field log was kept of the observations as well as a personal diary of the relevant experiences. Second, some six hours of taped interviews involving three or more family members and resulting in transcripts

were acquired, as well as notes from innumerable dyadic unstructured interviews. Third, a series of 90 letters from the participants to each other and to me were translated from the Portuguese and analyzed. Fourth, the unfolding crisis necessitated numerous phone calls to and from Brazil, and these were reported in written form and became part of the data.

The participants were selected because they were members of a certain family with whom I became personally associated. My nascent interest in family problems was therefore focused on this family. In 1976 at the beginning of the study, the participants were Maria, the mother then aged 51, Paulo, the father 55, Luis, oldest child, 23, Sandra 22, and Janaina age 20. Naturally all names and contextual data have been modified to preserve the confidentiality of the informants.

Data Analysis

Four kinds of analyses were carried out on the data. The first was a factual chronology of the family history assembled to provide an understanding of the context for the study in terms of how the present family was influenced by the events and personalities of members of the family now deceased. Several critical incidents both from the distant and from the immediate

past emerged from this analysis and offered points of entry through which interactions and roles could be analyzed further.

Secondly, a search was made to uncover the "existential ensemble" of shared experiences which created the meaning of their family life for its members. Rolf Von Eckartsberg (1979) has drawn attention to the ways in which individuals create a life-world containing the important people in their lives which is based on mutually interacting perceptions and actions with these people and which is shaped by their joint experiences. These experiences are shared, discussed, and incorporated into a "culture," as it were, which is peculiar to the family and which forms the matrix of their future perceptions and the actions which result from these perceptions.

Thirdly, an analysis was done of the protocols to uncover themes, which would reveal persistent patterns of emotional and cognitive responses of the five main actors. Thematic analysis is useful as an aid to picking out the underlying, frequently unconscious intentionalities of the actors with their accompanying feeling states. The informants' choices of words, their habitual responses to moods and situations can help to provide an understanding of the meaning of these

actions. These themes can offer the researcher a way to enter, intersubjectively into their lived-worlds.

My approach to the data was hermeneutic in that the emphasis was on laying open the meaning of the words and events in the stories of the actors' lives as seen by them.

A fourth analysis was done to elicit material which could be used to characterize the roles the informants acted out. An effort was made to uncover the requirements, the problems, the challenges, and the successes or failures each person experienced in his or her task as a family member. An important consideration at this point was to become aware of the perceptions these people had about their roles and the roles of the other family members. Concurrently, checks of these perspectives were done using 2-3 person joint interviews, and through detailed comparisons of the same event. These checking analyses were also done to ascertain my perceptions and to test for the reality of the whole picture as it emerged from the data.

Metatheoretical Considerations

Although issues concerning the nature of the research purpose, design, and method, as they find their place among the various kinds of scientific research,

are not always dealt with explicitly, this section will undertake to give a brief account of the way I conceived of my task and the nature of conclusions I could draw. My stance as the researcher and my basic theoretical and analytical approaches to the data are also of interest in that they shed light on the connections among the purposes, the data, and the conclusions and interpretations placed on them. This, in turn, opens up the inner workings of the research so that its validity and integrity may become apparent.

This is a descriptive study whose essential task is to explicate the life-worlds of a small group of people. No claim has been made to explain causally the informants' lives in terms of a pre-conceived, covering law. Instead, heavy reliance has been placed on the notion that the immediacy of the communication of the material in the protocols makes possible an inter-subjective communication between the reader and the informant. Thus, the validity of the study rests in part on its foundation in the actual life-world of the informants as they speak to us. It rests as well on the foundation provided by detailed, careful, analytical procedures carried out on the data according to participant observation methodology.

As the researcher, I paid close attention to my position as a participant observer because of my status as a trusted associate of the group in the research setting. I was accepted as an insider, and as such, could obtain privileged information based on the trust and empathy of the informants towards me. I made scrupulous and deliberate efforts throughout the course of the research to distance myself from the feelings and opinions of these people so as to be seen as an impartial and uninvolved listener. Even though this was not completely possible, I avoided interfering and expressing opinions. I was aware of the need to be drawn into the informant's circle of perceptions in order to get highly relevant information, but at the same time I was cognizant of the danger of being drawn into too subjective a personal involvement.

Before I undertook the study, I explained its purposes and methods to the informants. They agreed to allow their words and writings to be used in this way.

Hortense Powdermaker has described the creative tension present in the researcher working in the field. She discusses the search for a balance between the roles of insider and outsider in the following way.

To understand a strange society, the anthropologist has traditionally immersed himself in it, learning, as far as possible,

to think, see, feel, and sometimes act as a member of its culture and at the same time as a trained anthropologist from another culture. This is the heart of participant observation method--involvement and detachment. Its practice is both an art and a science. Involvement is necessary to understand the psychological realities of a culture, that is its meanings for the indigenous members. Detachment is necessary to construct the abstract reality: a network of social relations including the rules and how they function--not necessarily real to the people studied (1966: 9).

Theoretical Considerations

In the course of the study I read various materials which discussed the knowledge already available on the Brazilian family. These sources will be discussed in this section in order to connect this research to the current thought on the subject. The authors are cited in order with the largest scale concepts first. Then works related to conjugal conflict, generation conflict and role theory will follow.

Lia Fukui in her review which concerns studies of the contemporary Brazilian family states that:

All of the studies about social change utilize the same theses, the same methodology and have as their fundamental aim to evaluate the divergences or differences between the empirical data and the model of the conjugal family considered characteristic of the industrialized societies. For these authors urbanization, industrialization,

the migration associated with the progressive individualization made the control of production gradually pass from the family to capitalist firms and the state; with this kinship ties weakened, the family reduced its size, the father and the husband had their authority diminished and the family unit oriented itself towards functions of socialization, emotional satisfaction, companionship and affective relations (1975: 17).

I attempted to incorporate an awareness of these ideas into my work. Interesting and critical comments on recent studies in Brazilian family sociology were made by Carlos Alberto de Medina in his book Familia e Mudança [Family and Change]. He discusses the inappropriate application of anthropological constructs from abroad to Brazilian culture:

Studies by Brazilians sought to construct a description of the Brazilian past which emphasized the family group characterized as the "patriarchal family." This description became a general background for subsequent foreign authors, who in their empirical work found in certain areas vestiges of the situation previously described. They introduced a tonic of transformation and another pole of analysis, the nuclear family, thus generating a dicotomy, traditional-modern, capable of putting the situations encountered within a frame of reference which had been accepted and formulated outside Brazil. Such foreign authors, who came as importers of a problematic constructed in their own countries, could apply it in Brazil with few difficulties. They made use of a relationship between two poles which gave sense to the data they encountered (the picture of the patriarchal family, the past) and with this they guaranteed for their formulations

(the characteristics of the nuclear family) a dimension of the present. This permitted a non-questioning of the data, and a lack of criticism of the new work which confirmed the statements of the older publications. With a "gentleman's agreement," all were fine, only the family wasn't...(1974: 84).

The model of the traditional patriarchal family created by the classic works on Brazilian society--with Gilberto Freyre in the lead--is still accepted. And present occurrences are seen as the result of a disintegration of what it is supposed went before. This lack of criticism impedes seeing the family within a Brazilian context (1974: 88).

This distrust of a reliance on a construct imported uncritically into a research setting was echoed by Lia Fukui in a statement made to me. "The image the family has of itself is mythical" (Fukui: 1982).

As the research unfolded it became apparent that Paulo did not enact the role of the firm, ruling father in a patriarchal family. Another dynamic was at work, which may be characterized by the image of a family run by a heroic, long-suffering and dedicated woman. The phrase "matrilineage of heroism" suggested by Francis Bessac became a unifying theme of the study (see foregoing discussion).

In order to clarify the use of the term matrilineage of heroism, the following definitions of

a hero are given:

...in the dramatic sense, central figure in any important event or period with whom one is supposed to sympathize, a protagonist; any person admired for his qualities and achievements and regarded as an ideal or model (Webster's New Unabridged Dictionary, 1979: 852).

Synonyms for heroism are, courage or fearlessness, and fortitude which is the quality of bearing up nobly under trials, dangers and suffering. A connotation of heroism which is pertinent to this study is the notion of "battling enemies; having courage in conflicts with living opponents."

These definitions are significant in that they show us what it meant for Maria to be placed in this line of heroic women. She had to embody these characteristics of courage and fortitude. She had to battle with enemies in order to be admired and honored for her achievements. Adding to the weight of this role was her sense of being called to imitate the ideal model of her mother and grandmother before her. This sense of her role is the energetic source of her need to control her family.

I found support for the idea of a matrilineage of heroism during a 1982 interview with Tania Salem,

a Brazilian family sociologist. She said, "The female line is most important here [in Brazil]."

As Alice Beatriz Lang notes in her annotation of Charles Wagley's book Amazon Town:

The ideal pattern of behavior emphasizes the figure of the father dominating, controlling and sustaining the family alone, and the woman docile and passive. In reality, the woman is frequently the central figure in the family, forced to assume her responsibility and authority, being the important economic element, especially in the lower classes (Lang, 1979: 181).

In the literature there were several authors who had relevant ideas on the conjugal roles of women and men. As Lia Fukui says in her comments on Oracy Nogueira's 1962 book, Família e Comunidade (Family and Community):

The husband, authoritarian and inaccessible, had little active participation in the daily problems of the house, considering them incompatible with his position. On the contrary, the woman participated actively in the economic problems and the administration of the house (Fukui, 1979: 172).

A paragraph from Tania Salem's outstanding book O Velho e o Novo: Um Estudo de Papéis e Conflitos Familiares (The Old and the New: A Study of Roles and Family Conflicts) indicates the complexity of the changes taking place in the Brazilian family.

Certainly, Maria's concept of her role reflects the conflict of traditional and modern values:

Given that historically the woman had been allocated to the fulfillment of household duties, an unambiguous commitment to outside work would presuppose a reevaluation of the female role, which would in turn mean a revision of the sexual division of labor within the domestic family unit. On the other hand, while this role (the woman's) can be thought of as a block, it is not inconceivable that some of its aspects could be undergoing revision while others continue strongly sedimented in consonance with the stereotypes in effect.... Generally this suggests the existence of three basic dimensions inherent in the female role entailed in the domestic-familial environment which are objectivized in the images of the woman as lady of the house, as wife, and as mother (Salem, 1980c: 108).

Mariza Figueiredo, an avowed feminist and sociologist, made these explanatory comments to me in a personal interview in 1982. They can give some insight into Maria's unhappiness:

The woman is frustrated after marriage because she is depersonalized. Her husband expects her to produce children, raise them, be beautiful, bring in money, have food on the table, be seductive, be happy, administer the house, perceive that he is unhappy.... Who saw her unhappiness and helped her? He has only one role--to provide. The husband as a son has everything provided for him. So if he doesn't leave home soon he has more time of comfort. He looks for the same thing when he puts a wife in the house. Whereas the girl goes from being served to serving (as a wife).... The woman is educated

to be judged. The social pressure falls more on the woman. She has to conform to avoid comments.

Tania Salem's article "Conflito, Poder e Negociação na Família: A Questão Geracional" (Conflict, Power and Negotiation in the Family: The Generation Question) has many important comments about the generation conflict which were useful in analyzing the data (emphasis in original):

... all of the themes which generated open conflict between the generations centered, in the final instance, in the children's behaviors which were seen as capable of compromising their future family role, like breaking the tabu of virginity and using drugs or contaminating the perpetuation of family status, for example unsatisfactory academic performance and going steady with boys from families whose socio-economic and/or cultural status was seen as not equivalent with that of the daughters (Salem, 1980a: 189).

... children have for their parents a significance which is not only affective but also instrumental. ... Among the social levels which constitute the object of this work (the upper middle class) ... due to the fact that the ascending trajectory of the family has been recent, the children have a crucial role in the continuity, consolidation, and even complementation of the recently conquered position (Salem, 1980a: 193).

... the latent tension which permeates this moment of passage (into adulthood) is translated into a generational antagonism in the way of conceiving the relations between the family and the individual.

The parents advocate the dominance of the values and limits of the group over the individual, while the young look to escape from this control, trying to affirm the delimitation of an identity more their own and personal (Salem, 1980a: 191).

The costs which the parents would have to bear with an abrupt breaking of the relation are evident: if the natural leaving is already felt to be a loss, an unnegotiated leaving would assume a character even more dramatic. This type of separation could be interpreted as evidence that they had been weak in their fulfillment of their parental role, upsetting thus their self-esteem. Besides this, there would also be in play the emotional as well as instrumental investment made in the children throughout their lives, at the exact moment in which the fruits should be collected (Salem, 1980a: 197).

Three role theorists' ideas were brought to bear on the analysis. The first was Frederick S. Nadel, who enroute to a large scale, sophisticated conception of social structure, made cogent observations about role enactment which are applicable here. The idea used was that:

The option made by an actor ... is likely to be itself determined by the previous responses he encountered on the part of his co-actors. In a mutual steering process the performance of one role guides or conditions the performance of the other (Nadel, 1957: 44).

Nadel goes on to point out that sanctions are:

not sanctions but arbitrary or illegitimate responses unless ego ... accepts alter's understanding of alter's role, with all of its consequences for ego's own behavior (Nadel, 1957: 52).

Furthermore,

... any successful corrective act is such only because the individual corrected is perpared to concede that the corrector is acting legitimately in pursuance of his proper role (Nadel, 1957: 54).

Another role theorist whose ideas were valuable was Francis Ivan Nye, a leading American family sociologist. He and his associates have analyzed conjugal roles into eight major task areas, according to the following rationale: While one's roles may be established on the basis of people occupying other relevant positions--for example, one is the daughter of a mother, the wife of a husband, as Nye following Bates points out:

... tasks may form the basis of the subdivision of the concept, rather than the categories of people. For example, in the housekeeper role, the mother serves equally her husband and children.... Bates also proposes that, although a position is composed of a number of roles, the same role can be found in more than one position. For example, the child socialization role is part of the positions of both the father and the mother... (Nye, 1976: 10).

The eight conjugal roles are briefly described below.

The first role, socialization, refers to the social and psychological development of the child, into a competent, social, and moral person. It involves teaching children what is right and wrong, and helping them develop a sense of responsibility, competence in school work, and skills in social interaction. The second role, child care, involves keeping the child clean, fed, warm, and protected from physical dangers and frightening experiences. The third role, that of provider, means to produce or obtain needed goods and services. The fourth, the housekeeper role, means to take the goods and prepare them, maintain them for family use, i.e., cleaning and repairing, dealing with food, clothing, and money. The fifth role, kinship, has the obligations of participating in rituals and ceremonies, and promoting the welfare of family members. The sixth role is adequate sexual relations. In the seventh, therapeutic role, the partners help each other express their feelings, give help in interpreting their difficulties, and provide emotional support and encouragement. Finally, the eighth marital role Nye identifies is recreational. Here the couple share leisure, i.e., activity, apart from the obligations of work, family and society, turned to at will for

relaxation, diversion, knowledge and the exercise of one's creativity.

In the course of the analysis, I referred constantly to these eight roles, viewing them as tasks to be performed by the couple as parents and as marriage partners. This was done in order to discover and assess the competencies of the informants. A knowledge of the actor's strengths and weaknesses in each of the areas can assist in the effort to see how the "culture" of the family evolved. It can offer an explanatory framework as well.

A concept called "natural triad" developed by Morris Freilich which deals with role differentiation within families was used to connect the role enactments under study with theoretical work concerned with kinship structures. A natural triad consists of a group of three people usually found in kinship groups where one person from the less dominant side of the family has a warm, easy relationship with an inferior, low status person from the dominant side. The low status person, usually a child, is protected as well from the power of the high status person on his/her own side of the family by the high status friend (Freilich: 1964). These little groupings are important

in that they create some roles, norms and expectations for behavior which will have an effect on the dynamics of family interactions. I used this idea to analyze the interactions.

Research Questions

To state the use of these theoretical ideas in more problem-oriented terms, it is conjectured that a better understanding of the dynamics of the role enactments within the structure of this family, and by inference many other Brazilian families in similar circumstances, would contribute to the understanding that is needed to lessen the strains of generation conflict and conjugal conflict. Several questions about these roles are addressed:

1. What are the self-concepts of the informants and what are the role expectations they accept?

2. How do the actors perceive each of the other actors as fulfilling his or her family role?

3. How may the findings of the study be further analyzed and interpreted in terms of role theory, especially those concerned with natural triads and kinship?

4. How may one relate the themes and actions of this family in general terms to Brazilian family roles?

5. What are some of the ways the results of this study may be viewed in terms of the larger social and historical context in Latin America?

6. What implications may be drawn for any efforts to ameliorate the problems faced by families in similar circumstances?

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the data and the results of the analysis in five forms. The first is a section giving the historical background and context which places the family in time and space as well as in economic and social terms. This description is important because it introduces the reader to the family members and their ascribed roles within the norms of their particular context. Also included is a table, Concurrent Chronologies of the Participants' Lives. This chart illustrates in visual form the intermeshing of each person's life. One may look across the chart to see, for example how 1978 became the crucial year. Secondly, each family member is described in terms of his or her self-concept through the analysis of the protocols. These show how each one viewed himself or herself both as individuals and as players of roles. It was noted in the material on theoretical ideas from Nadel (p. 44), that people learn to define and describe themselves in ways which are influenced by the impact they have had on others. Therefore, the quotations of the participants also

contain perceptions of others about them.

The third way the data is presented is through the medium of critical incidents. Each of the five actors tells his or her story of a critical incident in the family history. First the three children's stories illustrate how they experienced their changes in roles from dependent children to independent adults. All the stories express the extreme degree of generation conflict that was present because of Maria's strong need to retain control over them. Then the parents' critical incidents are discussed as examples which epitomize conjugal conflict. This series of events ends the marriage. The critical period in which the crisis developed and occurred has been divided into three parts: one, the wedding, or thundercloud on the horizon; two, the storm, or the dissolution of the family; and three, the aftermath, or reformulation of the family members into new groupings.

The fourth way in which the data is presented is in a chart which summarizes the observations I made and the material I collected on the efficacy with which Maria and Paulo filled their conjugal roles. This chart uses F. Nye's eight major conjugal roles.

The fifth way the data is presented is through thematic analysis. There are two main thematic areas.

The first, control, contains the themes of deceit, interference, disrespect, and manipulation. The second area, a prevailing instrumental view of others, unifies the themes of personal aggrandizement, incomplete communication, and conflict resolution through avoidance.

Historical Background and Context

The importance of context in this study cannot be overestimated. Although both the father's and mother's family histories provide important data about personal goals, attitudes toward life, and expectations about other people's proper behavior, it is the mother, Maria's, ancestors who appear to have figured more heavily in the lives of the present family. Maria stands forth as the last in a succession of powerful, almost matriarchal figures. She, especially, seems to have gained her sense of the role of "mother" from her own mother, Clarissa, while Paulo, the father, appears to have been not as much influenced by his father, although letters to Maria by Paulo's father indicate that he also had a romantic nature, which may have influenced his son. Much less is known about the paternal ancestors in general, a fact which has implications for the direction and form which the study took, and which reflects accurately the primary influence of the values and

beliefs embedded in the matrilineal line. These values and beliefs are the leitmotifs which form the bases for the themes which appeared in the analyses. The fact that her family was at one time wealthy and powerful was to have consequences for everyone in the present group, since the parents' values and expectations were often compatible with a reality now gone. Therefore, what follows is a brief description of a middle-class Roman Catholic family of Portuguese, German, and Indian extraction, set within the larger context of the modern era, whose roots lie in the Victorian period. These roots were very traditional and strong and helped to shape the generation conflict which ensued in the 1970's.

Brazil in the late 19th century was still a very open society. A frontier of economic opportunity, as well as a physical one offered chances for a family to rise. So it was not unheard of for a family such as Maria's to achieve the power and status that she felt was part of her heritage.

Maria's great grandfather, born in the early 1830's, was deeded a large grant of land in the interior western part of the country in the early 1860's by the Emperor Dom Pedro II. His holdings were prosperous and, as was the custom, he also had a mansion in Rio de Janeiro. One of his children, Maria's grandfather,

studied medicine in Recife when he was a young man. On a visit to Rio, he fell in love with a governess in his mother's employ. She had come from Spain to Santa Domingo and thence to Brazil where she taught Spanish, Italian, French, and English. His mother forbade their marriage and banished him when he married her. Shortly before the turn of the century, he took his wife and young child to the family estate to settle down, and was shot by the overseer under mysterious circumstances. His widow then became the local schoolmistress and raised their three daughters, one of whom was Maria's mother.

In 1911, Maria's mother, who was then 16 years old, married a man in his early 30's and they eventually had five children. Some time in the late 1920's Maria's father went to live in another state as the trade representative for his state. As one daughter described him, "He dressed well and went after women." His wife was caring for her elderly mother, who was ill, and by the time she and the children could come to be with him, he already had a lover and rejected his original family. When Maria's grandmother died, Maria's mother took her five children and went to Rio, the capital city. Maria, therefore, had known about the heroic struggle of her grandmother to raise her three daughters alone.

At age ten, she was to see her own mother make her way, without a husband, strong and capable. She too, successfully raised her family alone. These two women's lives, no doubt, presented Maria with two powerful role models.

Maria's mother worked for the customs office, which was quite an achievement in those days when job opportunities for women were more limited than at present. Her sons became successful bankers and her daughters also acquired professional jobs. One became a social scientist and the other worked at a social agency. Maria graduated from high school and became an elementary school teacher. After teaching for ten years, she married Paulo, a journalist. However, she continued to teach for another ten years, while also having three children. Their first child, Luis, was born in 1953. Sandra, the middle child, was born one year later, and Janaina arrived in 1957.

Paulo's story is less detailed, perhaps because he came from a less illustrious family. He too, had parents who were separated, so that the family records were dispersed. His grandmother came to Brazil around the turn of the century from Austria and his mother was born on the ship. His father came from the northeast of Brazil. The couple had three boys, one of whom

became a security administrator in a factory, the other, a public relations man, and Paulo, who became a journalist. Maria and Paulo met by chance, and the family folklore described how he wooed her successfully in spite of his recent arrival and lack of family connections in Rio. The persuasiveness of his "lyrical and sentimental" poetry won Maria's hand.

The couple set up a house in a residential district, which was once quite wealthy. They had help from Maria's mother. There were three households of her relatives, all within an eighth of a mile of one another. So there was a social network which lasted all during the childhood of their children. It ended with the departure of one of Maria's sisters, who took up residence in the country several hours away after her husband died, and finally with the death of Maria's mother in 1974. The figure below shows the households and the relatives in this network, which had such an influence on the story as it unfolded.

Clarissa,	Maria	Dora,	Maria's
Maria's	Paulo	Maria's	brother
mother, and	Luis	sister	João and
Teresa,	Sandra	and her	family
Maria's	Janaina	spouse	
spinster	maid		
sister			

Figure 1. Households of Clarissa's Family

As Maria tells it, her husband worked steadily, but had a serious illness in mid-career and didn't fulfill his early promise of a successful career in publicity and communication. She also said that he was vain and didn't do work which would have gotten more money. The eldest son, Luis, although bright enough, repeatedly failed school examinations and quit courses. At the age of 25, he had only worked sporadically at low paying jobs. Finally at 29, still a bachelor, he secured a job with some future in the electronics field. His income was not sufficient to enable him to leave home. He also continued to receive the favored treatment of a son. The older daughter attended college in Brazil and North America and chose to teach, but not as a regular elementary school teacher like her mother. Janaina graduated with difficulty from high school although she too was capable academically, and has drifted through several clerking kinds of jobs. She has visited North America a few times and these interruptions have worked to prevent her from building a career.

In 1978, Paulo, the father, left the home to live with his mistress. This was the occasion for the dissolution of the family entity. At the present time, Luis alone lives with his mother, while Sandra is in North America teaching. Janaina is also there and has

entered a religious organization as a neophyte.

Thus, the period covered by the research began shortly (about a year and a half) before the separation of the parents. The generational conflicts had begun at least five years before, and the crisis of dissolution had been steadily developing. Then the researcher continued to work with the family throughout the abandonment of the home by the two girls.

In order to clarify the family relationships a family tree is presented below in Figure 2.

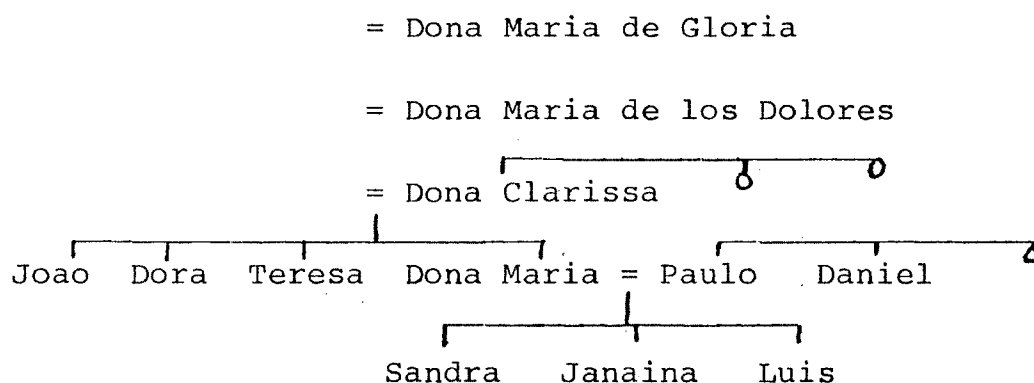


Figure 2. Matrilineal Family Tree

Year	Sandra	Janaina	Luis	Maria	Paulo
1971	at NY high school on exchange	starts with Marco	quits high school	fixes up house next to mother's	
1972	visit to	Sandra's "family" N.Y.			
1973	studying teaching English	kids from N.Y. "family" visit Rio		her mother dies	
1974	goes to Oregon to study at the university	college prep course studies philosophy			
1975					
1976		in July visits N.Y. with K.	starts with Lia		
1977	returns home, is secretary goes to U.S.	starts with Roberto	starts evening work		in spring starts with mistress
1978	3 week visit Rio	announces marriage plans August, elopes	breaks with Lia	April: wedding in northeast May: separation	
1979		lives with Roberto, back home, 18 of 36 months			
1980	8 week visit Rio				visits Europe
1981					
1982	7 week visit	no work.	starts career job		visits Florida
1983	5 week visit Rio	religious neophyte			visits N.Y.

Figure 3. Concurrent Chronologies of the Participants' Lives

Maria's Self-Concept

Maria pictures herself as a woman who has lived for the well-being of her children. She said, in 1978 when the marriage was still intact:

the principal characteristic of my personality is immeasurable attachment to my family, forgetting myself, my life, my pleasures and private interests. My mother was also like this. She lived for her children, having all of them around her until she died. My children should forgive me if they don't like this way of being. It is one more fault that they encounter of mine, as mother and woman [wife]. . . . I'm obstinate and for this my children are more or less O.K. - on the right road. Parental initiative is primordial. I'll die with a free conscience that I did the most for my children.

During the past ten years while the children were leaving adolescence and entering young adulthood, she strove mightily to direct their behavior and to control their environment so that she could meet the expectations she placed on herself as materfamilias. In 1982 she reflected on the fact that her family was now reduced to one son living at home. Her words are of regret and even despair. She is glad her mother is not still here to observe and share her shame.

God does good things though you may not know it at the time. My mother was taken just before she would have become aware of so many bad changes, including the behaviors of her grandchildren - these deceptions.

I don't think that my children have been very much my friends - some a little more than others. They are grown up enough now to know what they do. When they have problems at least they know that I warned them. But this doesn't matter anymore since I'm about to die anyway.

Many of Maria's words about herself describe her endless round of household chores, her efforts to educate, and provide economic opportunities for her children. She is also concerned that her children marry into socially upwardly mobile families of the same or better social class. A very good example of these concerns is shown by the following material quoted from a letter from Maria to Sandra.

Look for work which will be in accordance with your education and social condition. You always faced hard work with satisfaction and energy, even while you were living under our protection. All of your initiatives to raise your cultural and social level always have and will be completely accepted by us, especially by me, who, in spite of the faults I have, can say with an open heart that I have always been at your side helping you in your studies, your work - accompanying you and giving you incentive, more to you than to your less brilliant siblings, because you, from the beginning were and still are being a motive for pride for the family.

In the following series of quotations one may see that she views herself as a martyr, because she worked so hard, so "unselfishly," and so relentlessly. She says she was unaided and unappreciated by Paulo,

her husband. The following quotation was written after Maria and Paulo had separated. Her bitter words in a letter to Sandra reveal how estimable she had thought herself to be, and how ill-used. When she talks about "comparing" in this passage, she is expressing outrage that Paulo who was then involved with this other woman had the audacity to compare the two women.

. . . he lived this whole time falsely here, [this was after he had begun his affair] allowing me to struggle so much - so that he could be well attended. . . . He stayed on in the house calmly, falsely, demanding from the children that rigid morality that only a man of good behavior can demand of his wife and children. I innocently continued struggling - until he even called me a flagellant. He called me this, without ever giving his help so I could avoid a little turning myself into this. When he arrived at home and saw me in the kitchen, using modest clothes, without make-up, making my porridge and sleeping on the couch - dominated by the tiredness of the struggle, he compared us and thought I was a flagellant. Ah, my daughter, how much indignity! I deserve more respect.

She grew up believing in and following her mother's precepts about a mother's role, because she hoped to enjoy the same respect and love she thought her mother had earned. She describes how her mother helped her children.

My mother didn't have so much culture - she had more experience and respect [for the social institutions]. But we, who climbed much further than she did through her guidance, all of us formed a circle of respect

around her for having managed to carry her children to the top, without her having been at that height.

The term "matrilineage of heroism" describes well Maria's sense of being a woman who is part of a long line of powerful, heroic figures who have managed to keep their families together and even advance them despite the fact that their husbands were either absent or ineffectual. Her major role as Dona da Casa (Lady of the House) is one of the three roles described by Tania Salem (p. 16). It involves administering the household and caring for the kin. These roles are also mentioned by Nye as housekeeper and kinship roles. But associated with the term is a whole complex image of the woman as the protectress of the hearth and as a pure, virtuous and stable center of the family.

Her ability to fulfill her major role as Dona da Casa and her feelings of self-worth have been called into question by the treachery of her husband and the disobedience of her children (as she views their actions). She feels she has paid a terrible price for her dedication to these duties and roles, because she has failed in them.

She resents the idea that her husband didn't fulfill his responsibilities as father thus forcing her

to be both father and mother. He carried on in his "vain" preoccupation with writing while she raised the children. The fact that she had to depend on her family for extra money in spite of the fact that she worked as a teacher for ten years early in their marriage added to her sense of being overburdened by life's demands. She describes how badly she feels about not being able to have developed the freer, more romantic, happy side of her personality.

I only lament that the harsh reality of my life has deadened my "lyricism" and almost totally my "romanticism" - feelings so pretty and pure. It's a shame - a shame that only your father has had the right to live his life surrounded by these feelings.

Indeed, she sums it up this way. "Today, after all, I ask myself if this renunciation was worth it, and I don't find any response that convinces me that I was right."

It is interesting to note that although a powerful figure in the eyes of others, she appears to see herself as powerless in the face of her husband's personality and actions. Other information about her perceptions of Paulo will become evident in the critical incidents.

Paulo's Self-Concept

As Paulo assesses his life as father and husband he gains comfort from the knowledge that "he has worked hard mentally." He has behaved in a dutiful way giving his wife the money she needed. He remarks, "I came home and put all the money in her hands." He worked hard, sometimes at more than one job. He feels he doesn't deserve the criticisms of Luis and Janaina. In a letter to Sandra he describes their rejection of him after he had left Maria.

I lament the coldness and indifference of your brother and sister toward me, a card thrown from the pack. They forget, perhaps, that the good roof that protected them, resulted from a battle of years in a row, with the couple struggling day and night.

He has been "honest, faithful, and dutiful in spite of all her [Maria's] dissatisfactions." "I did everything to give her a little happiness in a city of 1,000 temptations."

He sees himself as a person who has a very spiritual, even a romantic nature ("sentimental, sensitive to life"). He seeks affinity with a person of like spirit. He has struggled through an existence in his marriage which "didn't surpass being a collection of things, futile and fragile, without flavor, without the real feeling and essence of life."

The following passage shows that he is aware that he is perhaps more "spiritual" than others, but also reveals that rather than accept responsibility for performing uncongenial duties, he asks God to accept him and work it all out.

I know that the world with so many transformations must find these sentimental people ingenuous. But what can I do if God made me like this? I deliver everything to God, who knows my intimate thoughts, in the various aspects of life. I know I'm not perfect - I have my sins and only the future will clear things up, if I deserve it.

As he writes to his daughter he again explains how the world of social rules and expectations doesn't understand someone like him. "Therefore, Sandra, the sieve of the eyes of the world sees only the external side of things - the interior of each person only God knows."

In the following paragraph he describes how he is a good man in that he acted to hurt others only for a good reason.

It is false the impression that people suffer because of others. No, daughter, people suffer for their past mistakes which sooner or later they must pay for. I give great significance to that magic word love - which starts, grows and, sometimes, ends. Why does it end? Simply because between the lovers there is always something missing, one or the other says. Be it for opposing temperaments, be it for the lack of reciprocal feelings, even if living under the same roof,

sharing the same bed. I don't believe that those who break up do so without a just cause. No, there must always be a motive. People aren't this bad. Especially those who bring their gamut of feelings from the cradle, and native land.

In this last sentence he refers to his feelings that a person of his nature is simple, innocent, close, as it were, to the pure soul of the Northeast.

He evaluates his part in the dissolution of the family as an expression of his "right to life, to happiness which hides in any odd corner. . . . In this autumn of life I have a tranquil conscience about my role."

Although there was pain caused by his actions, he feels it was worth it to go to live with his mistress after a year of subterfuge.

In my new life I feel a human warmth that I never felt. I don't want to criticize anyone but it is the truth. We both struggle for a peaceful future. Every night we ask God with hearts open and without resentment to care for our two flocks [families] like two adolescents in a state of grace. Receive these lines with the happiness of a child in the park. Receive them how I write them; with a thankful and happy heart.

As he thinks further on his role as spouse he even begins to see himself as a man who has acted out of love, even out of conscience. He has this to say about his leaving.

It might seem strange to say this but my separation was an act of conscience, maybe even an act of love. I believe that Maria's suffering is a case of atavism [meaning adherence to older social and family rules and codes]. May God forgive me if I am wrong.

Paulo Perceives Maria

Paulo sees his wife as one who has concentrated all her efforts on raising her children and who gave him "little attention, tenderness, warmth or kindness." She had a strong sense of family pride and wanted her children to have money, social position, according to their due, and good jobs and educations. It was extremely important for her that she be, as he says, "the super mother, super intelligent, but not as a wife." She worked so hard she was too tired to go with him to the theatre, etc. although he tried to invite her. She managed the money, and he had little control over domestic spending. As he reflected on her behavior, he thought she over-worked just to get at him. He remembers how "we had money for someone to iron clothes, but she was up at 4:00 a.m. doing that, or up at 4:00 to take Janaina to the bus stop to go to work." Maria rejected his little gifts of luxury to her saying they were too extravagant; the children had to come first. Maria used money to buy the children's love, but

expected him to be the harsh, strict father. But when he tried to control the girl's social life by scolding them for staying out late, or monitoring their choice of friends, Maria would complain about his harshness. The incident of Maria's gift of a motorcycle to Luis still rankles in Paulo's mind. Maria bought it for the boy when he wasn't earning and was failing in school. He didn't deserve it, yet Maria fought Paulo's efforts to be a wise and stern father.

In Paulo's eyes Maria was a self-created martyr, who really didn't love him and tried to prevent him from finding love and "attention and tenderness" within his family. He feels he was forced to leave, finally, by overwhelming needs for these things.

Luis's Self-Concept

Luis does not talk much about his conception of himself as a person. He describes himself in terms of his actions. From this one may infer that he sees himself at 26, as performing the role of dutiful son in that he now remains as the "man of the house." He traded his parents' old house for a modern apartment and maintains it. He says in his letters,

I have been working here with tenacity doing
a bit at a time so that we don't lack comfort.
I have still not taken a vacation this year

since all the free time I have is almost all used in the tasks that come up here; you know how it is, put in a light, arrange the rug, put up a picture, a thousand things. But it is worth it since the satisfaction I feel is enormous. [When he finally got a job with computerized communications at age 29, one sees the kind of behavior his mother always wanted in her son.] I am completely integrated in my work and very satisfied with it. I don't tire of thanking God for having gotten this position.

He recalls his life from about age 18 to 25.

I did nothing for six or seven years - played, slept, screwed, but I don't regret it. I'm young at heart still and this is why I love young girls. They are unlike older ones I've known who have loved and suffered and who are marked.

This self-indulgent behavior was accepted fairly well by his mother, perhaps because of the culture's general forgiveness towards sexual adventures of men. According to the other family members, she worried and nagged him, and yet spoiled him with gifts.

It is important to note here that Luis has had two severe crises in his life during the past ten years. The first is a broken engagement, and the second is the dissolution of his parents' marriage. One may speculate about the effects of these experiences on him in causing uncertainty and a poor self-image. His restlessness and impatience with conditions around him is demonstrated by the fact that he has visited the U.S. once, and is

extremely interested in American life. He continues to want to own all kinds of electronic equipment. (His mother gave him many of these items.) He says about his trip:

I always admired the U.S. and when I got there I fell in love with the country. I like to live surrounded by all the things that the time we live in can give. Brazil is an undeveloped country, where mentally undeveloped people live, and never gave to me a chance to have some things I always wanted to have, to see. That's why I hate it. The people here, with few exceptions, are too ignorant to accompany the world's progress in all areas and too proud to copy other countries.

Luis's long description of his unsuccessful love affair and engagement will be discussed at some length in the section on critical incidents as they reveal generation conflict and shed light on the dynamics of the mother-son relationship.

His general inability to go to college, to marry, or to get a decent job, anything that would be as Maria puts it, "in accordance with his knowledge, inclination, and his social condition," leaves us to infer that he is somewhat dissatisfied with himself, at least until recently, when he assumed two acceptable roles, that of wage earner, and now that his rival, the father, is gone, that of "man of the house."

Sandra's Self-Concept

Sandra realizes that she grew up in a very protective, even over protective environment which has made her dependent on others. She knows she still is somewhat this way even today. She describes how important her mother and grandmother's expectations and rewards for acceptable behavior were for her.

I grew up pleasing my parents and my grandmother. She was delightful - so energetic. She painted oils, played piano, cooked, washed, did crochet. She made me play piano for visitors which I hated. She was very conservative - totally against bikinis. She loved me because I followed in my mother's footsteps. I always got a reward.

Her mother was ambitious for her and constantly stimulated her to achieve success.

I was motivated to try and do my best - to be on top. I was always ahead. All the doors were open to me. Being productive led to respect. I was constantly praised. Mother hurt me sometimes by pointing out that others had gotten ahead of me by being more clever, alert. She's very ambitious. She always had me take care of credentials. She is a go-getter. It was this push which made me like this too.

A very strong bond of affection tied her to her father. She says about this bond, "My father was so proud of me. I was the subject of his writings. I was very drawn to him. I couldn't bear being away from him."

Reflecting on her teen years she recalls that she was a very serious student, somewhat afraid of sex, conceited about her accomplishments, and not really fitting in well with her contemporaries.

She has gone through a strong rebellion against her mother, insisting on being an English teacher and on taking up a scholarship in North America. She describes her and her siblings' struggle for independence in these words.

I felt so relieved to be here in the U.S. away from her. I started being strong-willed at 19. Not so much discovering ourselves but discovering our rebellion against her imposed pattern. We perceived the obvious manipulation and controlling. Anyone going against her, she struggled with. My father was the one who had the most opposition to her. He wasn't about to give in. He confronted her.

Now at 23, when the following conversation with Maria was recorded, she sees herself as capable enough to stand against her mother's will. It is interesting to note that she also perceives herself to be strong-willed like the very person she fights. This dialogue shows as well the source of Maria's dogmatism: her conviction that older people know what is best for their children and that they have the moral responsibility to insist on conforming behavior.

Sandra: You are a person who imposes her ideas a lot. You impose; you condemn; you say that it is this; it is this and it can't be helped.

Maria: But I don't obligate that anyone follow me.

Sandra: I am also very similar to you on this point. I sometimes impose my opinions. I say that this is this - for me it is this and if you don't want to follow me I will continue with that opinion. We are very similar on this point. That is to say that we have strong personalities. Your's [mother] is very strong. Many times you impose on me, you say do this. I would say I won't do it because I don't think that it would be right.

Maria: If you were a person of 17 who said I won't do it because I don't think it's right, when an experienced person such as myself said do it because I think it will be right - All the times that I could accompany your life you only went well. The day that I did not, you went bad.

Sandra: If you tell me something which really is applicable to my life, I will take it into account very well. But if you tell me something which I don't find in accordance with what I think, with my opinion, I won't take it.

Maria: It doesn't even cross your mind that your mother could be right?

Sandra: I want to try myself. I'm not saying to her that her opinions aren't valid for me. Many of them I have accepted.

Maria: I only said that you have wanted to err since you took your own path.

Sandra: But I prefer to err from my own mistakes.

Maria: Well then it's right. You want to make mistakes.

Sandra: It's not that I want that.

Maria: You want to follow no one.

Sandra: No, I want the liberty to take my own initiatives. If I err I learn.

Maria: Then it's too late.

Sandra: If I err and it's late then it's late.

Maria: This is to say that it doesn't help that you have two spiritual orientators [her parents] here within the house.

Sandra: But Mommy, the more you think that you are right perhaps in my case you wouldn't be. Why do the parents have to assume this role of saying that they are right?

In general Sandra believes that she is acting well, "rationally," capably, achieving "practical" success at schooling and jobs. She says that perhaps she is a bit aggressive, but only if others deserve it. It is part of her nature; she is a person who is spontaneous and full of the love of life. The following conversation illustrates her view of herself.

Sandra: I think that how I am, my spontaneity is so without malice. I don't have malice. I don't save rancor within me. The only thing that makes me become aggressive is the aggressiveness that is given to me. Every time someone is aggressive with me I respond aggressively - in the same currency - it's something spontaneous. I am very authentic and spontaneous. If a person is an angel with me then I am an angel with them and like this I have always lived.

Maria: Then if you love some person and if they say something wrong to you then you will respond in the same way?

Sandra: I reciprocate with the same treatment but I try to show why I am angry - I get mad but I try to converse.

Father: It's very hard to conjugate the verb to tolerate. One must tolerate to the maximum.

Sandra: But these affronts give me aggression to return to them.

Maria: But why is this right?

Sandra: I don't know if it's right.

Maria: Why continue if you don't know if you are right?

Sandra: But that's what I've been saying to you, I'm spontaneous.

Janaina's Self-Concept

Janaina sees herself as a person who is passing through two transitions. The first is learning to stand free from her family's influence and control, and the second is to fulfill a need she sees in herself to be a "spiritual" person. She feels too that her greatest happiness would be to find a man who would seek the spiritual side of life, and who would not be too concerned with material things. As she puts it "I really want to be in a Romeo and Juliet thing." Together as partners they would shape a beautiful life.

Janaina knows she is good-looking and attractive to men, but feels that she is perhaps different from others, in that she wants more from a relationship than sex, babies, and a house to tend. She explained that she didn't really care about sex, clothes, money, and fun, but the evidence indicates that she has actively pursued all of these things. One may speculate at the degree of inner conflict she experiences.

She has always been a "loner." In an interview in 1977 at age 21 she said:

I have never had any friends. It's very hard to find someone with whom you can be yourself. I was a copy of Marco [her first lover]. I'm fed up, in a prison, can't talk to anyone. I'm living for them [her family]. I don't like to talk about other people [meaning the continual family gossip]. I don't want to know. All this is in my way. How can you be spiritual if no one else around is? I don't care about anyone here. This house depresses me. I can't stand the nervousness.

Janaina is someone who has struggled to find within herself a person she can respect, someone who makes her own values. She describes how she has done things of which she knows her mother would disapprove and has felt constrained to lie in order to keep up some semblance of a mother-daughter relationship. Other contextual materials such as the description of her elopement, contributing to this feeling will be

clearer when the critical incidents are discussed in the next section.

Again, as she has sought to define herself as a person apart from her family, she reveals how she fights for self respect.

I discerned by myself to not be a prostitute or a drug addict. I had much more contact with the world than with home. At home only that rigid education. I used to camp with friends but I always said that I was going to my boyfriend's summer house with his parents. Mom was so busy with the house, she would say O.K. go ahead and have a good time. I felt guilty about lying.

Although she recalls some earlier happy times with her family on vacations, for example, it seems she sees herself as having been lonely and somewhat neglected, throughout her childhood. Before and after work Maria would help Sandra with school work because she was so demanding, whereas Janaina appeared not to care about academic success a great deal. She describes her perceptions of their family interactions then.

My childhood was wonderful. We were a family - especially at _____, on vacations. My parents were apart from us - being Mom and Dad fairly much together. My mother never talked to me about anything personal - ever. She liked to have lots of people in the house - our friends. I was very close to her, attached to her. She worked much harder than my father. They weren't friends with each other. This is the most important.

Another contributing factor to her sense of separateness and loneliness may be found in her words describing how her father treated her. In a conversation five years after the marriage had broken up I asked her how she evaluated the break-up or apportioned the blame. She had this to say about it.

I am objective. I say what they [my parents] did that was wrong. I personally think he erred more than she. In society's view, the man has to maintain the marriage - so he is wrong to leave. As the "Head of the Family" he didn't act, take initiatives, so my mother had to. I never felt any affection for him. My father never spoke with me about anything, so it was unpleasant when he suddenly started to yell at me about my going out with guys. So he got my hostility. He could have talked with me about it as a friend.

The following quotation also reveals the weakness of her bond with her father. In fact, there is a flavor of resentment and impatience as she describes her father's frequent phone calls to his former wife, Maria.

Father doesn't stop bothering Mom and the others - even me! Every time I go home it's the same thing. Luis tells me that Daddy calls and keeps asking about me, how I'm doing, what I'm doing, how much I'm earning etc. What does this matter to him who spent life only blaming [recriminating] for the things I did and never worrying about what I was feeling or how I was doing?

Janaina's most recent letters reveal that she has suffered a lot. She has broken off with Roberto, because of their fights, the fact that he is married, and that they have no money. He is the only man she has cared about and has "wanted to give a child to." She has made progress in her passage from child to adult. These words show a person who sees herself as still lonely, but now more able to accept herself. She appears to see that she is one who will not have the good things she wants, and is trying to adjust to her condition.

I have already lived and suffered and I am learning to discern between things. I am having the capacity to stop and think about what is suitable, fitting for me in every sense, and to assume all that I do. Today I renounce many things, marriage, little daily conjugal life, because I have known how to decide what is or is not good for my life in the sense of spiritual development and consequently material life. I am now more alone than ever before but not in the sense of solitude and sadness but in the sense of being more of an individual.

Critical Incidents

The two organizing ideas, generation conflict and conjugal conflict, will be used to conceptualize a series of related events which epitomize the role enactments and themes. The two areas may be viewed as

a sequence of events each having their roots in past time. The generation conflict develops vertically from past to present as a function of the maturation process of the children, while the conjugal conflict although proceeding through time is also a function of a horizontally conceived conjugal relationship, Paulo-Maria. The crisis in the family occurred during a brief year span in which these conflicts reached disastrous proportions. At the nexus of these two developing and dysfunctional sequences the break came.

The three children each suffered through his or her crisis. Sandra, the oldest daughter rebelled and emigrated, Janaina tried unsuccessfully to marry, as did Luis. Only Sandra has succeeded in marrying and in leaving the home, at least partially. But she is still involved in the plots and counterplots. These children's stories form the three critical incidents illustrating generation conflict. These will be described first.

Then conjugal conflict will be set forth through three incidents: the wedding in the Northeast, the thundercloud, the storm, or actual dissolution, and finally, the aftermath in which the various actors continue their shattered relationships in some form. The data is very rich in instances and dialogues which show the themes and the perceptions of the family members.

The events will be presented in narrative fashion interspersed with quotations. They are to be viewed as texts which one may interpret and search for themes and meanings. These meanings will in turn be explicated and related to the relevant theory in the conclusion of the study.

Generation Conflict: Sandra's Story

Sandra's academic ability and drive made it possible for her to visit New York in 1971 as a high school exchange student.

I was very dependent. When I went to New York at age 17 I cried. Mr. Larry and Mom [host family] were so kind. The kids teased me because I was shy. I called home at Christmas and cried on the phone. My mother told me to shape up - that she was disappointed.

By 1973, after many angry scenes with her mother, she was able to stand against her mother's wish that she become an elementary teacher, even though she was certified to do so.

When I rebelled at age 19 I told my mother that I wouldn't be an elementary teacher but go to a college which trains English teachers. I hurt her because I went against her. I said that her reasoning was rotten, my motives were O.K. She almost beat me. I told my father that I'd have a boyfriend and that I didn't want any interference. I had to impose my will. I was successful at 20, teaching, studying in college and to be a secretary.

She insisted on carrying on her English studies, to the point where she was able to pass the Michigan and Cambridge tests of English proficiency. Thus she was qualified at age 22 to study on a scholarship in Oregon to become a high school English teacher. This was an important moment because Sandra successfully confronted her mother. She was not particularly interested in boys, and her career was still close to that of which her mother approved. In 1976 she fell in love with a fellow student, X, and they wanted to live together. She told her mother she was planning to do this, whereupon Maria sent Janaina to see that she didn't. (This is Sandra's interpretation of the reason for the visit.) Janaina was at the time sexually active, and was getting over an affair, so perhaps Maria thought it would be useful to have Janaina out of Brazil.

Sandra's affair continued and in 1977 after a six month stay in Brazil, Sandra and X were married with the reluctant blessing of the parents. Sandra says that since she had slept with her lover before marriage, her mother would agree she had to marry him. Paulo's letters at this point express the idea that Heaven had intended them to be together because his daughter would never have done such a thing with someone who was not really meant for her. In all these interchanges, God is

appealed to by Paulo and Maria as the judge of right or correct behavior, i.e. only God will know if you or I did the right thing. In this case, they are referring to permitting their daughter to marry for love, while at the same time protecting family honor.

Sandra has lived since then in the U.S. but has visited the family four times, in 1978, 1980, 1982, and 1983. She has acted against her mother's will since then by seeing her father after their separation, thus incurring her mother's wrath. Although she does express some guilt over her actions in regard to her lack of filial duty, she appears to be the most successful of the children at establishing her own identity and life style.

In the following passages Sandra discusses her view of her mother now that she can look back and assess it.

My mother controls us in two ways. She makes us dependent by doing so many things for us. Then she uses this to try to make us feel guilty by showing herself to be in great suffering whenever we go against her will. I respect her for her help. One thing is to say I did this out of love for you. It is another thing though to say I did this out of love for you and therefore you owe this [loyalty and obedience] to me.

Sandra has given some thought to how her mother has acted to control her children. She sees it as due to

the influence of Maria's mother and partly due to her nervous, intense personality. Here is how she sees it.

My mother is a magnet. She controls everyone. Everybody is very careful not to offend her. She dramatizes things. She is very disappointed. She lived for us. We were the source of her happiness. Her solutions for our problems are to shape up - do the right thing. For the children it was either behave or be bitched at. She was a very self-centered woman. It was her [her mother's] ideas about good/bad, right/wrong. Lately my mother says things like "I'm not going to give you my opinions anymore. Do what you want and don't ask me." Intimately she is still against what we do, but it is almost as if she has perceived that any more negative attempts on her part to interfere would be of no avail. She still has power over us though, because her discomfort makes us feel guilty.

In this last passage Sandra sums up her mother's futile efforts at control. It is interesting to note that her love for her mother seems to prevent her from visualizing different and more truly loving ways her mother could have acted.

Generation Conflict: Janaina's Story

A sense of restlessness and of drifting and being alone characterizes Janaina's life since she first visited New York with Sandra and Luis in 1973 at age 17. She has held six airline or clerk type jobs, and has spent at least 25 months unemployed including one period of 15 months she spent at home unable to get a

job. She had to return to Brazil after an unsuccessful attempt to find work in New York. During this time, a period of eight years, she has had three serious love relationships and several affairs, each one interspersed with, from her point of view, ignominious returns to her mother's house. She is now living in the U.S. in a religious center. One may infer she is exhausted, disappointed in love, and now needs to find a home away from home.

One may enter her story at the point where after the end of her first serious love affair, Maria suggests Janaina go to Oregon to "save her sister Sandra's honor" by sleeping with her in a 2 bedroom apartment so that Sandra's intended must have the other bedroom. The patent unlikelihood of this being achieved shows the unreality of Maria's efforts to affect her children's lives. On her way as an emissary, Janaina spends six months in New York having a love affair with K. Finally, back home, having left K., she gets a job and begins a new relationship. This new man, Roberto, is from Maria's point of view, entirely unsuitable. He is poor, of dubious social status, and is still married to a wife he has left. It is at this point that the critical incident occurs. Maria plots to get Janaina away from Roberto, and enlists Sandra's aid.

However, Janaina and Roberto make a bold effort to seek jobs together in the U.S. They fail and must return to Brazil. The deceits and manipulations of all the actors except Paulo (who is at this time carrying on his affair with the woman for whom he later leaves the marriage) preclude any true understanding or healing between Janaina and Maria.

Upon their return to Brazil and unable to find work in the home city, Janaina and Roberto live together secretly in a nearby city for 18 months. Janaina visits home every two weeks, but quietly continues this life of lies. This makes her so "nervous" that she breaks with Roberto, leaves her job, and goes home. She has not been able to fashion a new life sufficient to break her bonds with Maria and ultimately returns home yet again. This whole incident is critical because it is the strongest effort Janaina can make to find a husband and achieve a new role. It is also important because it shows how the consistent patterns of deceit, disrespect, manipulation, and unbridled egotism destroy the actor's ability to communicate their needs, or to respect each other's rights.

The following paragraph gives us a glimpse into Maria's thinking at the beginning of the effort to break-up Janaina's affair with Roberto. She attempts

to enlist Sandra's support and writes to her in these words. Her strong determination to have her daughter, Janaina's life work out as she has envisioned it, is also apparent.

At work Janaina has a boyfriend who doesn't let go of her. They leave work together and come here. He only leaves after midnight. The next day she has to be at her job at 7 o'clock, almost dead trying to get out of bed. As I am a good observer I can say that he is only a good pastime for her. He is a good guy - but for her not more than this. Suddenly it occurred to me to ask your help with a problem that is taking years from my life. You know that my temperament is to be carried away by passion when dealing with things having to do with the family. Could you invite Janaina to spend a month with you? If she accepts I will move heaven and earth to send her. She suffered a great deception with K. but as of last week she spoke about her desire to go to the U.S. to study. At the same time she told me that she had resolved to marry Roberto. But it happens that he has been married since he was 18, and soon separated. Now he wants to attach himself to Janaina for another adventure - this time illegal. And the fool is stumbling on the idea and wanting to impinge upon the family a wedding in a church which is not linked to the Vatican! In this church people marry who are only separated. . . . Well my daughter, you can evaluate the trauma this unexpected decision caused me. Janaina does not love him. He is totally crazy about her and doing everything so that this will happen. . . . As to me I'm demolished. I ask you to understand me. I don't want to impose my will as I've heard from people several times. No - I only want to set my children on the right road. What Janaina is intending to do is not for love; you can believe it. It is only an escape valve caused by her failure with K. I'm sorry for her. I'd do the

impossible to avoid this failure. Janaina deserves that we all collaborate for her to be happy and not fall into this mistake which will make her shed many tears. My spirit is profoundly disturbed.

Sandra agrees and invites Janaina to visit her. She accepts the invitation, at the same time quietly hoping to find work in Oregon. Maria's letter shows how certain she is that she has done well.

Janaina received your invitation and has become happy and communicative. Now we have the absolute certainty that I've managed to impede her drastic, thoughtless, absurd mistake - a lying and ridiculous marriage. If it weren't for the courage that I get to confront these difficult moments today she would be unappealingly stuck with one whom she absolutely does not love. She is happy - awaiting the trip. I ask you to destroy all that I wrote about the problem that motivated your invitation. She must not know that this trip was planned so as to avoid a mistake on her part.

This next sequence of events illustrates further the instrumental and deceitful way that the children deal with their mother. From their point of view they are driven to it by her rigidity. She, on the other hand, feels it is within her role to save them from themselves by whatever means. These actions illustrate well Nadel's idea about the need for the actors to accept each other's definitions of the other person's role. The destructive acts ensue when this consensus is broken.

Roberto and Janaina conspire to travel together and seek jobs in Oregon. With brother, Luis's secret help, they do this, thereby placing Sandra in the position of receiving them and thus deceiving her mother. The following excerpt shows Maria's feelings as she begins to realize that she has been outwitted.

Did you know my daughter, that the little colleague of Janaina's, Roberto, has disappeared from Rio? He was supposed to be back from vacation three weeks ago and until now nothing. He quit his job. He had some clothes here in the house and we went to give them to him and found this out. [According to Janaina she went through her belongings and threw away everything connected with Roberto - pictures of him and his family.] Could it be that they fooled us and are together there? Could it be that Janaina could do that after seeing me suffer from another dirty trauma that hit me also? [Her husband had just left her. This then is the nexus referred to earlier. Maria is suffering because all of her family is scattered and/or disobedient.] Right now I don't believe that she is capable of such a thing. But then I didn't believe that your father, so lyric and sentimental was a man so rotten . . . I have my claws bared. I hope that you are not hiding anything my daughter. It is enough what you did [not revealing she knew about her father's affair], which I forgave but did not forget. The anguish continues - I'll die with it. If Janaina told you anything about this, tell me everything. It's better that I suffer, knowing all than be cruelly deceived by my own children with treachery and falseness, feelings belonging to enemies, not children.

This sequence of events illustrates the chain effects of deceptions which disable honest relationships.

Each actor acts to deceive others, indeed is forced to do so because he has literally had no experience in learning about alternative ways to deal with people. As Sandra says, when someone is aggressive to her, she will be aggressive back.

After Janaina's return home from the affair with Roberto, which was causing her to be nervous and sleepless with guilt, she spent months job-hunting. She found one, and then worked for a while. Using savings and money from Maria she revisited her sister and then came home to face a 15 month period of unemployment. Eventually she got a job, found a man, and following her escape pattern, left to visit his country, Israel, via New York. She visited her sister and then made her way to the religious house. The man she had hoped to escape with never made the assignation in New York.

In short, Janaina has essentially been disabled in her efforts to build her own life. She feels that she is alone, misunderstood and unwanted. These words of hers, written but never mailed to her aunt Teresa, (who had written to Sandra) shortly before entering religious life, reveal her feelings.

I never thought that it would arrive at this extreme. Your opinion about me and my trip - to the point of thinking that Adi [her last companion] is a bandit and a rapist of women. And I am the one who is

influenced. This is to say that I never have my own opinion but am always influenced. I already discussed, showing my points of view, but I saw that it didn't help at all. And now Luis is the little saint and the good boy and I am the black sheep of the family. [She said about her aunt's letter to Sandra.]

My aunt's letter gave me a headache. They don't love me. Luis is crazy to sell that shit of an apartment and take his money. Mother is completely against me quitting my job, but she has stopped trying to make me change my mind since she knows I won't.

Generation Conflict: Luis's Story

Luis's story centers around generation conflict in two different sets of relationships. First there is his struggle against his parents. He defies their demands and tries to lead the kind of free, irresponsible life he wants, not getting a degree or a decent job. This requires that he be given money by his mother to help him keep up with his wealthier friends. Because he was her son, she was indulgent, and so he was able to quit part-time jobs and deliberately fail or not attend courses. He had to take a remedial course to finish high school. He did not work - or only at part-time jobs, for long periods, from age 17 to 23. Even now he works three-fourths time; this is good given the present Brazilian situation where it is very difficult to find good jobs, especially without credentials.

All through this period the parents battled for control of their son.

Despite her love for Luis, Maria is very critical of him and has always pestered him to get a job more agreeable to his ability and social position. Janaina noted in a letter to Sandra, that she observed constant fights between Luis and Maria about gas for his car and money. Paulo used to try to prevent her from giving money to him to eat out, but with no effect. However, Maria may feel that since she needs him, she must "buy" his presence. After her husband had left she said about Luis, "He is attentive. He is my father. I'll go anywhere when he marries so he can have this apartment." Sandra told the interviewer that Maria tells Luis that she'll go to a nursing home. One could suppose that since Luis would find this unacceptable, he would have to choose caring for her rather than marriage.

Now at 30 he says, "he never stops thanking God that he works in his beloved electronics." He has vowed never to marry and continues to live at home. The pattern of secrecy about his activities, such as keeping his room locked even when he is in the bathroom, indicates how wary he has become of his mother's interference in his life.

The following dialogue between Luis and his mother, which I observed and taped, suggests that he has worked out an independent stance of sorts. Maria was explaining to the interviewer how she, herself, would do what was required by her mother.

Maria: Even with my mother being dead I still do what she would say I should do. It's because he doesn't understand these things. He doesn't understand what roots are. To him roots don't exist anymore - it's all like this, superficial, you know.

Luis: That's right. Roots to me, I only admit one - education [good manners]. . . .

Maria: Which is the most important thing

Luis: But willingness, desires, things that one would feel like doing, you don't go after your Mom, your Dad, your roots, nothing, you do what your head tells you. . . . Do you know why? It's because every time you do this, you'll be creating new roots, your own. You don't need other roots. People are not plants. Of course, this is the world of today, and I'm very happy to be living in today's world. If I'd been born in her time, with my kind of thinking, I'd be sent directly to the "madhouse." You want experience - go look for it - make your own experience.

Maria goes on to explain the old days and Luis replies that times are different now. Children can risk! Maria's answer is an interesting sidelight on her wry sense of humor.

Maria: This is different. In my time it wasn't this way. The adolescents were fearful of having any experience, and would look for their parent's help, so that they

wouldn't make a mistake. Because they were really young. They would feel too young to have hard experiences, difficult ones.

Luis: What happened was that in the past, parents would fill their children's heads so much, about the bad things that might happen if the children didn't follow their parent's advice, that they wouldn't even make an effort to develop their own thinking; they would simply do what their parents told them to do. Not nowadays! Nowadays by means of communication, the young have open eyes, they know that their parents can say what they want, but they know that they can see, they can evaluate. In the past there was no option for evaluation; either one would follow what his parents wanted, or he would run the risk of making a mistake, and everyone was afraid of running a risk. Not nowadays! Nowadays the world shows everything. You may follow your parent's opinions, or your own. You have everything before you for evaluation, for testing, for getting to know or look for. In the past it wasn't so. They would sit at the table; what the father would say everyone would say O.K. too. I compare a family from the '30's and 40's, a family of six, to a father and five idiots, that's how they were treated. Because the father would say something, and the others would say "Amen." What is your brain for?

Maria: And even though I said Amen, an anthropologist still wants my opinions!

The second way in which the Luis critical incident illustrates the effects of the generation conflict is in the story of Luis and Lia in their attempt to escape their parents' homes. Janaina had tried to elope and failed in the end. Luis never rebelled that much, but was driven back and forth between anger, rejection,

hope, and shame until wearied of it. He stopped trying to marry. Perhaps this will happen, but at this point he has lost the struggle.

The story is this: Luis was engaged to Lia for about a year after a year of going steady. Maria thought he should get a job before he could consider a serious affair. Lia's mother refused to acknowledge his suit, calling him a "bum," "humiliating him," and refusing him admittance to the house. Following the pattern of removing the daughter from the scene, she sent Lia to the country to get her out of the way. Luis finally got a part-time job which he hated. Lia, feeling neglected, we assume, took up with other boys. On the strength of the job they became engaged, but a month before the wedding she broke the engagement. He pursued her; they fell in and out of love. Only a few weeks later he found her pregnant by another man. She wanted him to accept paternity for the child. He refused. Outraged, pleading, families in an uproar! At last Lia come to Maria's house, very reluctantly was allowed in, and then was insulted by Maria. After two hours in Luis's locked bedroom, they came out having agreed to marry. Maria then threw the girl out.

Here is what she said. Her words echo tragically through the years from the time when Luis's great, great

grandmother threw her son out for wanting to marry his mother's governess.

Lia came here one month after she had broken up with Luis. She spent two hours in his room and they came out with him convinced to marry her. I was mad at them for this. She put me down for this [being angry]. I told her she could never enter the house again. I told him that if he married her he could never come home again.

A second consideration that is also of interest in connection with Luis's generation conflict with his mother is that Luis also couldn't prevail over his fiancée's mother's determination to prevent him marrying Lia. This woman, like Maria, considered that marriage is a contract between families, for mutual social and economic gain. It is significant for helping us to understand how these traditional means for dealing with men who are deemed unsuitable are handled.

Conjugal Conflict: Paulo and Maria

The story of Maria's and Paulo's violent confrontation and break up after 26 years of marriage is one of gradually increasing tension, explosion, and then aftermath. This description will follow these three main divisions, but will be preceded by a brief account of each actor's definition of his role. The definitions of accepted and normative conjugal roles were described

in Chapter 1. But in this section more attention will be paid to the case of these two people as individuals, representing, in a sense, these culturally defined roles. Idiosyncratic and personal factors were at work, above and beyond prescribed conjugal and sex role norms. One finds exaggerations and distortions of them. For example, Maria becomes not merely a good mother, but a "supermother," and Paulo becomes not merely a dutiful and loving father and husband, but a lyric and sentimental, older man who cannot earn the love and respect of any of his family except Sandra, the one child he truly cared about. Instead he "shames" his wife by taking up publicly with a divorced, middle-aged woman. He does not follow a common, and culturally more acceptable, course of action, that of keeping a secret mistress or of just having easily condoned non-serious and discrete affairs with younger women. In Maria's eyes his great sin is to love this other woman. This is the final insult which places his act beyond the limits allowed in Brazilian society when it deals with the marital infidelities of older couples.

To clarify the background of the story I will go back to the early days of the marriage to describe the particular setting and family history as they shaped this crisis and dissolution.

Much of the background is already available in the previous pages on self-concept and perceptions of others, but it will be related to these materials so as to provide a different emphasis. The data materials which have been used to formulate this story are found in the interviews, the letters (from in-laws as well), from family geneologies, and from participant observation. They will be blended into a narrative so as to present a unified picture of the ways in which these actors shaped and, in a sense, prefigured, the tragic denouement of their story.

Clarissa, Maria's mother, as gathered from family accounts, apparently ruled the family with an iron hand. She had legitimate authority as the widow from 1956-1973 and before that since 1934 because of her husband's desertion. Thus she single-handedly brought up her family. She is reported to have slapped one of her grown sons repeatedly across the face for insubordination, an act he accepted. Another son worked in a firm without pay for several months at a job she procured for him just "to shape him up." These were a mother's actions accepted as fulfilling the role expectation of a matriarchal figure. Maria believed that this rigid overbearing domination of her children's wishes and plans for themselves worked well, at least as she

interpreted the situation. As she said to Sandra, "When you did what I told you everything went well, when you didn't it all went badly." She inherited her certainty and firmness from her mother and grandmother. This belief in firmness and correctness seems to be the unshakeable foundation for her treatment of her own children. In fact, she sees herself at the end, as having been less pure, and as having behaved less consistently within the demands of her matrilineage of heroism than her mother.

Early Years of the Marriage

Maria had had little experience with young men as suitors before she met Paulo. She was 27 then and had been trained in lady-like graces and accomplishments. Following her mother's instructions to find a respectable job she had trained as a teacher. However, she told me that she had never really enjoyed it. Maria had a great deal of family pride, and apparently a yearning for a gentle patrician life. She recalls with bitterness how the demands of her married life allowed her no graciousness or leisure. It may be that she had been led to expect that she could stop teaching after her marriage but this was not possible. The marriage had a stormy beginning. Maria's description

of a fight in the kitchen only two weeks after the wedding began a pattern which probably was often repeated. She came home late from her mother's. Paulo was angry and wanted dinner right away. She almost burned up the kitchen. One can imagine her need to be close to her mother and her inability to accept the new role of housekeeper, when she had been used to having servants. Here she describes to Sandra how she followed her mother's advice and did the accepted thing - staying on in the marriage.

Now that you are touching on the past, I think it well to explain the motives which led me to have disagreements, whenever necessary, with your father. He always thought himself lyric and sentimental, but after fifteen days of being married he showed that he was but a torturer to his wife and has continued like this until the present. Don't you know that twice, when I couldn't stand his requirements any longer, his excessively strict treatment of me, I was about to separate from him? The first time was the fifteenth day of marriage. The second time I was expecting Janaina. I almost left him. I wish I had not accepted my mother's advice to stay because I would have gone on alone, as I have been with him, being the "man" of the house. By myself I would not have had so much annoyance or financial difficulty because I would have been entirely supported by my family. Thus I would have lived a life in peace and you would have received the same upbringing anyway. Because the truth is that we always depended on the financial help of my family.

One may glean from her words how difficult she found it to teach, have three children, while all the time feeling herself increasingly left to carry the total load and responsibility for the well-being of the family. There must have been some good experiences, especially in the early years, but by the time the children were young adults, reconciliation was no longer conceivable. Here is a further quotation from Maria's reflections about her married life:

In my discussions I tried to take him from the vanity with which he was drunk, calling him to the struggle, asking for an equal division of the responsibilities as much at home as at work. But all in vain.

They also differed in their treatment of the children. Paulo favored Sandra, perhaps as a substitute for Maria who was too busy for him, and he ignored Janaina and Luis. Maria helped Sandra, and ignored Janaina, while supporting Luis. She recalls an endless round of work to keep the children clean and well dressed. She borrowed money or took it from her relatives to buy the material things she thought they deserved. Maria sums it up:

He flagrantly differed in his treatment of the three children. And he, as intelligent as he preached, wouldn't create a negative image. Like he always said "I don't like to have enemies." Mother, yes, she could be

cruel, insensitive, intransigent, hard as iron. But since I didn't manage to treat any child in a different way as he wanted, he incriminated me, and a lot.

Apparently all of her energy was devoted to the children and the house. As she says, thinking back on her dedication.

We would organize vacations, I became enthusiastic, but then I ended up at home taking care of daily problems. A noble mission which for me was accepted and fulfilled. Pondering about our financial difficulties dampened my enthusiasm a lot. Thus I remained my whole life with few well enjoyed vacations. I left work tired and returned to it tired as well. . . . He slept until late, took the children to school because their mother was on the street working, after dressing up prettily, growing a moustache, and wearing strong perfume then going off to his work which paid a miserable salary.

Paulo's perception of Maria, as described in the preceding pages, gives one some insight into his feelings and into his justifications for leaving. However, he did not talk very much with me about his own actions or about the actual day-to-day married life. But the perceptions of his children, and even his brother-in-law, about his position and power at home are revealing of the conjugal relationship.

Janaina: She didn't really love him. She took care of the house to the exclusion of taking care of him. Their lives were completely separated.

Sandra: Maria thought Paulo's fame would enhance her. His lyricism and sentimentality were well known - not a celebrity - he lost out. She called him an illustrious unknown - which was very derogatory. . . . She yelled about a lot of petty things, his not coming home in time for dinner, his buying luxuries. He expected and didn't get a cute wife waiting for him when he got home. She made a point of looking as simple as she could, while his brother's wife would be well dressed when she visited. She thrived on the dramatic - having slaved all day to prepare things. She didn't care about her looks, tough for him. She was a feminist. She already knew she looked good. So why do this and that to please the little husband? He likes the vanity of _____. It fits the macho pattern of showing off the wife [as a possession].

She was always very mellow about discipline. Her letting us get away with things infuriated him. She never really raised her hand [to hit us]. He would pinch us, spank us. He was so hyper. He probably resented her challenging and not supporting his authority. He never tried to evade working; at one time he had three jobs. He called her inflexible, proud, arrogant.

Maria's brother: He didn't have a voice at home. He couldn't even control the children. Maria has the defect of owning the truth and of doing too much for the children. Maria should have Luis pay rent. He is too spoiled.

The Critical Incident: Crisis and Dissolution

The Thundercloud

In the spring of 1977 Paulo began an affair with a woman about his age which he carried out for a whole year. Finally in the spring of 1978 there was great unhappiness in the family. Luis and Lia were being

separated by their mothers; Janaina had announced her plan to marry Roberto, and Maria was plotting to remove her from the country. Paulo was not staying in the house some weekends; he was dressing better, appearing happy. Clearly, something was happening. One can only infer that Paulo was so afraid of his wife's wrath if he should confront her directly that he took these devious means to tell her he wanted to live with his mistress.

He told his daughter, Sandra, about his affair and pledged her to secrecy. Later when Maria found out that Sandra had not betrayed this secret, her rage and shame were unbounded. Several years were to pass before she could begin to forgive Sandra for not having alerted her to what was happening.

Finally an opportunity arose whereby Paulo could find the strength and the means to force the issue. There was a family wedding in the Northeast in April to which he and Maria were invited. They accepted, but unknown to Maria, Paulo and his mistress and Paulo's brother and his mistress had already gone to the wedding festivities! The following letter to her daughter Sandra, though disjointed and incomplete, gives a true picture of her bitter sense of betrayal.

I've been silent [for two months] yes, with the intuition to preserve your well-being, your peace. But I've decided to be strong and tell you what's happening here. The trip to _____ was for me a disaster. While your father and your uncle, very "lyric" and "sentimental" were enjoying themselves a lot, I, his wife and family, including the bride-groom only suffered with the insensitiveness and irresponsibility of the two heads of the family, one with almost fifty years [his brother], and the other with white hairs and almost sixty [Paulo]. Together they decided to throw to the wind all that they had constructed. C's wedding happened. We took pictures, but they didn't say a word. C, good son that he is, had his honeymoon interrupted and suffers at his mother's side.

I know my daughter that you are sensitive and love your parents a lot, and that you will suffer in learning this truth. Resign yourself and hope for better days for our lives. For me and your brother and sister and our family, the coming into awareness of this was so brutal and unexpected that we are quite traumatized. But we have everyone to help us and we continue to live our lives.

She goes on to describe her humiliation caused by her being unaware, although his family members knew what the two brothers were doing.

You don't know yet that the whore went to _____ with the lyrical and sentimental father and spent twelve days there with the whore of the lyrical and sentimental Uncle Daniel. You don't know the affront he gave me, abandoning me for three days in _____'s house. I had to go to the wedding all dressed up in a taxi while the two men went in Daniel's car, entering all pompous and godfatherly. Everyone was very courteous to us, and I innocently laughed, talked with everyone - and he too. He was finding me very charming, because I made an enormous

sacrifice to look well. Where I was staying he gave only one phone call - to invite me to go for a drive to see the city. We four went [the two brothers and wives]. If I had known

Then, they returned and the crisis continued to unfold. Paulo refused the money for a treatment for Janaina's teeth, but credit bills for a TV, hair-dryer, wedding band arrived at the house. There were surreptitious phone calls; Paulo was perfumed, whistling, happy. Then the blow fell. He suggested that to save her honor, and their face as a family, he and Maria stay married, but he would live most of the time with his mistress!

The Storm

At this point Maria at last knew and faced her rejection. In this letter to Sandra she describes what ensued.

I, already enough humiliated, degraded, ashamed by the dirty proposal he made me, i.e. wanting to continue with me as good friends, while continuing with his whore; I made a balance of my life with him of the past 26 years; I called my two children, who were also very ashamed, knowing and watching everything without speaking, and finally we all arrived at the same conclusion: Give total freedom to the old father asking him for a friendly but legal separation. He wanted to continue to live here - treating me as a good friend [maid]. I didn't accept. It was hard for him to accept my request. For sure, a whore would

never be a flagellant in the house ready to satisfy his demands, which, by the way were many. He was being attended by me in everything and he never had anything to complain about.

She reports that he, "totally demoralized by her rejection of his affair" said, "I will leave the house. I want to make my life away."

The Aftermath

As was mentioned in the critical incidents illustrating the generation conflict, the children were forced to take positions in the realignment of loyalties that took place after Paulo left.

There had always been an affinity between Paulo and Sandra. He had trusted her enough to test out with her his news of his love affair. After the separation Paulo went to live with his mistress. When Sandra visited home in 1980 she went to her father's apartment for dinner with the new couple. Through the gossip network, word of Sandra's fresh betrayal (this was how Maria perceived this action) reached her. Again Maria was cold, scolding, and furious with Sandra. Still it is in his letters to Sandra that Paulo tries to describe his new-found happiness. He feels he is now living with someone who creates harmony, tenderness, respect, and tolerance for his faults. She does not impose her

will on him. It is certainly a differently acting person who describes his actions now. His former wife and children described him as "never helping in any domestic chore," but now this is what he says he does.

I live modestly sharing the housework and cleaning with my companion. All this is done with nonattachment, love, and harmony. Your words were read with calmness which shows that your father is not the same as before in terms of anxiety, excitement and anger. . . . One should not impose his will or truths without a perfect understanding of the other. It's always good to live with the one who makes an effort to make us happy both physically and spiritually.

Luis took his mother's side throughout the affair. He was so disturbed by his broken affair with Lia that he says, "I give you [Maria] a lot of trouble and expense." He says he would not want to go through all that and does not want to marry and have children. He reports on what his father is doing now.

My father has nothing to do at his work so he keeps on calling here - two, three, four times a day. One reason my mother is so mad [and everyone else], is that he keeps calling. He is still my father but not really or he would have stayed at home. Almost always I don't appreciate my father's visits to the store. He just complains about how he has little money, and asks how everyone is - Teresa - people he always hated. I'll never go to his apartment. I have only one home. If he needs [and he will], and he asks for our help and I help him I will try to remember the good things he did when I was a child and not the hell of the past three and one-half years.

Luis describes to the researcher what life is like at home now.

It's worse for mom's pride when Sandra visits her father because he tells everybody that his daughter visits him so as to create the impression that he is not to blame. She is ashamed so she doesn't talk with her old friends. When he would come home after his adventures my mother would be so nervous that everyone else became super nervous too. We can't have friends or anything because mommy won't allow it. She says people are spying on her. All the activity in the house revolved around my mother. I think she wanted a normal old age - with a husband after the children left. Mommy and Daddy weren't meant for each other. She cared about the house, the children, other's welfare. He wanted a more active social life.

We have traced Janaina through her abortive efforts to establish an independent life. She can't stand living at home, enduring her mother's "nervousness," struggling with guilt at defying her, and restlessly searching for peace. She has left for now.

The documents about Paulo's state of mind since the separation are mixed. Apparently, he is still concerned enough about Maria to give half of his salary as alimony. He says it is "more than the law requires, and, a point of honor with me." He calls (at least within the year after the break-up) frequently to find out how Maria and the children are doing. One can only speculate how Paulo is dealing with his new

life. Certainly, he must endure the slander and contumely of all the family members who are loyal to the ideal of the sanctity of the marriage contract.

Maria remains then with Luis taking the role of the "man of the house," with Janaina reluctantly at home and then, finally fleeing to the U.S. Maria says in a letter to Sandra two months after the break up that she was shocked to find out that her husband had been so unhappy. However, this quotation of Maria's recorded during a conversation I had with Maria, Paulo and Sandra made a year before is very revealing. At first they are talking about true love which could conquer all difficulties. Other materials show that this ideal was important to them both in the early years of the marriage, but the last sentence shows that Maria is now disillusioned and angry. At the end of the conversation, Paulo strode gloomily from the room.

Sandra: Do people have to change their personalities in order to grow together as a couple?

Maria: If you are able to change something in your personality which helps the common life to be happier you should say thank God that you have managed.

Sandra: But there are certain changes that one can't go through. It's as if one's personality would be distorted.

Maria: The life of a marriage has to have some modification. With love all is possible. No two people are the same. When there is love, much love, this is sufficient. The rest is silence. All is tolerated - the defects of the two are tolerated. But when this love is lost all is complicated and then there is intolerance - the worst thing in the life of a marriage. When you tolerate your wife and she tolerates you, then it goes right until the end. But when there is intolerance, then the life of the marriage is over. Any distortion which was made out of adjustment will only revolt you if your love turns to hate. I did all this and it didn't help at all.

The following figure uses Nye's classification of role enactments, and summarizes my observations of these action patterns as described in the preceding description of the critical incidents.

SOCIALIZATION: Luis and Janaina lack competence to achieve independence maritally and economically. All lack a sense of security and spiritual wholeness. All lack a firm sense of proper moral behavior. They appear to be unable to deal with others from a sense of what is right and wrong rather than what is expedient.

CHILD CARE: Maria says Paulo did nothing except take them to school, meet with teachers, and bedtime stories. Others report he gave them baths.

PROVIDER: Maria's aspirations higher than Paulo's. While Paulo always worked, she (with her family) did their share.

HOUSEKEEPING: Clearly an imbalance because although he maintained the traditional male role, she worked outside the home. Paulo was actually not observed or reported doing anything in this area.

KINSHIP: Close contact with Maria's family during the early years. Family ritual largely stopped with Clarissa's death. Paulo begrudged money for kids when leaving.

SEX: Though direct evidence is not available, inference is inadequacy for both: he left; she was tired.

THERAPEUTIC: Inadequate since neither felt that the other was really trying to respond to his or her needs.

RECREATIONAL: Not emphasized - Maria's strong work ethic, lack of time and money: Paulo insisted on some leisure and vacations.

Figure 4. Efficacy of Conjugal Role Enactments

Themes of Role Enactments

Themes are defined for the purposes of this study as significant, consistent patterns of perceptions, actions, and responses which persist among all the members of the family. Since these people share their common "existential ensemble," they are, in a sense, contained within the horizon of possible thoughts, feelings, and actions which they themselves mutually create. Their role enactments express their family culture. The role norms they advocated and desired to fulfill in a satisfactory and productive way, were impossible to enact as is made clear through the thematic analysis below. Throughout, this study has focused on the importance of how their behaviors destroyed the possibility for normative family development. Therefore, the seven themes illustrate destructive role enactments. They are stated below in polar terms to make reference to them in the protocols more understandable and to suggest possible alternative, and constructive ways of behaving. The following section restates the themes and links them directly to the behaviors observed and the destructive role enactments.

The first four themes center around the idea of control. They are: deceit as a frequent policy for

action versus honesty and openness, interference in another's life versus a willingness to let a person learn to make responsible choices, disrespect versus respect for another's privacy, property and thoughts, and manipulation of other's self-perceptions, environments, and possibilities for action in order to control them, versus persuasion, explanation, and example as means of modifying undesirable behaviors. For example control was exercised by Maria in her role as the authority figure, but the children also attempted to wrest control of their lives from her through deception. This was because they no longer respected her legitimate authority which had been eroded by her manipulative and deceitful ways.

Three other themes are related to the strength of the family role norms which press down heavily on the family members. One is either a son of the family, or a daughter of the family, or the lady of the house, or the head of the family, its protector and guide. These themes center around an instrumental view of other people. They are: personal aggrandizement versus concern for another's well being, incomplete, veiled communication versus the expression of real needs and desires, and the resolution of conflict through

avoidance versus flexibility and negotiation. These instrumental views are based upon the social importance of ascribed family roles which serve to achieve family solidarity and a desired position in society.

The actors are participating in a socially constructed reality in which they often feel estranged or distant from others. One talks or thinks about the attributes of the person. One sees the person in terms of his or her adequacy in fulfilling a social role. The question is not a personal one, but is, rather, impersonal. Therefore, one tends to maneuver within a situation to get what one wants and to use other people as instruments of personal policy. The following paragraphs will offer examples of the themes selected from the protocols.

The Four Themes of Control

Deceit, Interference, Disrespect and Manipulation

An example of interference occurred when Maria was attempting to prevent Janaina from marrying Roberto. She also lied to her about the reason for sending her to America. This duplicity was followed by Roberto's and Janaina's secret elopement. They lived together while Janaina visited her mother every two weeks and

never revealed her secret life. The strain on the mother-daughter relationship caused by this suspicion, anger, resentment, and guilt was immense.

An example of deceit was Luis's action when he took Roberto to the airport to elope with Janaina to America, even though he knew his mother had worked to get Janaina away alone, even to the point of selling some property to raise the money for her airfare. In this case Luis interfered in his mother's plan to interfere in and manipulate the conditions of Janaina's life.

The themes of interference, manipulation, and deceit were seen frequently in the relationship between Luis and Maria. She intervened in his choices about education and career, by using money, and coercion. He, in turn, deceived her about his activities with girls and job hunting in order to get his way. He appeared to be so dependent on his mother for money and approval that his responses to her general mode of acting became one of passive rebellion. He avoided open confrontation, but manipulated her to have his own way. These two examples also show how chain reactions of destructive behaviors occurred. It is as if these patterns of action and response were in a sense required by the actors of each other, once they were caught in

this system. Paulo's cruel way of making Maria aware of his love affair by arranging to be seen with his mistress at a family wedding illustrates the use of deception. It also suggests that he used his brother as a co-conspirator and supporter. He also apparently cared little for the bride and bridegroom whose wedding he spoiled.

A further example of deceit occurred when Maria said in a letter to Sandra that Paulo pleaded with her to be allowed to stay, while other evidence contradicts this. Teresa, her sister, said to me that Paulo was "dancing and singing around the house like a 20 year old" right before he left.

Sandra attempted to be honest with her mother in telling her about her love affair, but was harshly scolded for not following correct pre-marital sexual conduct. This precedent based on the fear of being misunderstood as an actor in her own right led Sandra to deceive her mother. She didn't reveal the knowledge of her father's love affair to her, and neither did she openly visit her father and his mistress. This transaction illustrates the ways in which destructive patterns of behavior shaped and even led to further deceitful actions, thus fostering the creation of

unbridgeable distances among the people.

The above instances also illustrate interference in other's lives and disrespect for another's personal integrity. These two additional examples provide more insight into the almost Byzantine atmosphere in the family. In his locked bedroom, Luis keeps taped records of his phone conversations with Lia, his former fiancée, made after they had broken up, so that no one could say he was persuading her to go back with him. He also taped a conversation of his uncle with whom he was in disagreement. The uncle had said angry unkind things about his wife and Luis threatened to reveal them if his uncle didn't let him work out a real estate deal with a part of Maria's and the children's property. Another example of the disrespect for persons and property is Maria's action of going through Janaina's closet while she was in America and throwing away all her pictures and remembrances of Roberto. As Janaina angrily remarked, "She has no right!"

The Three Themes of Instrumentality

Personal Aggrandizement, Incomplete Communication, and Avoidance of Conflict

The first of the themes that is related to an instrumental view of people is personal aggrandizement

versus concern for other's well-being. An example of this is Maria's determination to have her way about the kind of man Janaina may marry. She is absolutely convinced and certain of her judgment that Roberto and Janaina are not really in love. Perhaps, her judgment was clouded by her need to have her daughter marry somebody well-born and well-off. Since she had invested so much of herself in producing this girl, caring for her, providing expensive lessons, ironing fresh clothes for her every day, one could understand her need to have Janaina become what she, Maria, wanted her to be. However, Maria's own need to win overcame her concern for Janaina's real welfare and growth as a person. As Janaina said about her mother, the care was more physical than intimate and emotional concern. The social norm, in a sense, pushed her to define the realities of Janaina's life in ways that could let her, Maria, have her way.

Incomplete, veiled communication, the second theme, is, of course, related to deceit. It refers to a tendency to avoid speaking about what one really needs, expressing real fears and desires. For example, Maria could have responded differently in the dialogue on p. 48, when Sandra said, "If you tell me something

which is really applicable to my life, I will take it into account very well." Instead of challenging Sandra to deny her authority completely, by saying, "It doesn't cross your mind that I could be right?" she could have talked about specific, applicable examples in which her opinion would have heavy weight. She could also have talked about her feelings of love which lay behind her concern and dogmatism. Perhaps she doesn't really trust anyone to act correctly and so, therefore, can't imagine Sandra making the right choices independently of her. One may speculate also, about the width of the generation gap, which would make a "right" choice for Sandra so different from Maria's "right" choice.

The third theme in this group is resolution of conflict by avoidance. The two girls illustrate this by their efforts to get out of the house, even out of the country. Janaina's maintenance of a separate life in another city for 18 months with her lover, lying constantly to her mother indicates her inability to decide the conflict once and for all. Luis's behavior in avoiding open conflict with his mother has become a pattern of response to her actions. He had followed a system of staying up very late at night, getting up late, and getting money from her to eat out, so as to be at

home as little as possible. He signed up for courses because his mother insisted and then dropped them. He quit jobs she got for him shortly after starting them. He followed the pattern of seeming passivity, avoiding open conflict, but steadily trying to get his way as well.

To summarize these themes, one may say that they describe examples of countless behaviors over the years which have destroyed the actors' abilities to fulfill the roles they and their relatives have taken on. Not only is Maria unable to become the revered mother of a loving family, but neither can her children be what their roles demanded. The question may be asked, given the nature of the traditional role models the parents accepted, and the nature of the generation conflict, was this destructive pattern inevitable?

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

This chapter will begin with a brief summary of the study. This will be followed by a discussion of the results in relation to the research questions and to the theoretical and sociological references described in Chapter I. Initially the results will be stated in relation to the self-concepts of the informants and their roles and their expectations of each other. This will address questions one and two. Then question three will deal with a further analysis and interpretation of the findings in terms of role theory, especially that concerned with natural triads and kinship. Questions four and five are treated together to describe, contrast, and compare this family's themes and actions with Brazilian families in general and with the larger context of Latin America. Finally, implications for practice and further research are offered.

Summary of the Study

The study was a naturalistic, descriptive effort carried out over eight years by a participant observer, who had an insider position within a middle-class

Brazilian family. The family was in a crisis situation during the period covered by the research. Early in the time under study the marriage dissolved, and the children made efforts to establish independent lives. I intended to analyze the actions of the participants in terms of role theory. Because the family as a viable unit was destroyed, the identification and analysis of destructive role enactments and self-concepts did indeed become primary methods for seeking understanding of the course of the events. The theoretical framework of the study lay in recent sociological and anthropological work on the characteristics, structure, and problems of the modern Brazilian family. As the study progressed I observed some of the critical incidents. I also became aware of the importance of the family's history. The interviews, the incidents and my observations formed the data. From this body of material themes emerged which revealed the fundamental roles and relationships. The concepts of conjugal and generation conflict became a clear and suitable means for continuing the analysis and interpretation. Finally, the meaning of all their shared experiences became clearer when the concept of the existence of the "matrilineage of heroism" was used. The meaning of their actions which led to the

dissolution of the family became even clearer when the conflicts were seen as a result of the conjunction of the patriarchal and matrilineage of heroism role models in one family. Through the use of themes which described the destructive role enactments I saw that these behaviors had reached crisis proportions. They placed unworkable and unrealistic demands on the family members. In addition, their personalities made resolution of the crisis impossible.

The Results in Relation to the Research Questions

Although there is a good deal of material about self-concepts and role expectations in the presentation of the results, the following paragraphs attempt to summarize their significant aspects. The participants were perceived by others, in direct dyadic relationships, as not accepting their prescribed roles in crucial aspects of the family life. These were crucial in that they dealt with the formative influences upon their dyadic interactions. These in turn affected vital parts of one's self-concept, i.e., self-esteem and confidence. More importantly they were crucial because they permitted or gave validity to one's perception of one's self. The family culture thus allowed each person to

develop a generally non-self-critical stance and legitimated in each of the actors the continuance of a willful policy aimed at getting one's way. The net result was the erosion of the individual's responsibility for the development of a whole family.

For example, in the case of the dyad Maria-Paulo, he perceived himself as a dutiful, sacrificing, and long-suffering husband and father. She thought of him as vain, incompetent, and hard-hearted towards her and her son. Some of Paulo's protocols show his evasion of responsibility for the well-being of the family in that, he appeared to be unself-critical and also unable to reassess the failure or success of his task performance and thus create an openness in which he could change, and in which trust could grow between him and Maria. He placed responsibility for his supposed inadequacies upon Maria. Ultimately he looked to God to help him out since he had meant well. In short, the self-concepts of the people were, as stated by them, that both the mother and the father were good persons who were carrying out their proper role expectations. The children were less sure that they were carrying out correct roles because they were separated from their past by the attraction of new mores and values of their

generation. Janaina and Luis lacked good self-esteem perhaps because the goals they developed for themselves were influenced by the values of their own generation. Those were quite different in terms of desiring more sexual and social freedom than their parents thought correct. As their behavior deviated from the career and educational goals set for them by the parents, they failed to win approval. They had difficulty providing enough self-praise and ego support to compensate for the parent's disapproval.

Question two which asked how the actors perceived the others as to whether they fulfilled their roles is a complex one, because it is the result of the intertwining of the conjugal and the generation conflicts. For example, Paulo wanted Luis to follow a college career, as did Maria. But when Luis rebelled against his father's plan for him, Paulo saw no reason to reward him with a motorbike. Maria, on the other hand, although disappointed in Luis, saw every reason to give him the bike, because it would enable Luis to associate with richer people who had marriagable daughters. Therefore, the disappointments about the actions of Luis, in not fulfilling his expected role as son, for instance, were transferred to the level of conjugal conflict, thereby

creating further marital tension. In these kinds of interactions one sees support for Tania Salem's description of the themes which generate open conflict between the generations (see p. 17). The children's rebellious behaviors such as breaking the taboos of virginity and poor academic performance, which Salem also mentions, were seen by the parents as compromising the future of the family and the successful culmination of their efforts.

The presentation of the data and the foregoing discussion about self-concepts and role expectations illustrate well Nadel's concepts about the mutual steering process in which role enactments are interlinked, and how one role performance conditions and guides the other (see p. 18). Another example of this in terms of the generation conflict may be found in Maria's and Janaina's struggle over the control of whom she would marry. The poor relationship which had developed between them was further taxed at this time. Finally, as Nadel suggests (see quotation, p. 19), one person's actions (in this case Maria's attempts to frustrate Janaina's marriage plans) were not accepted as a legitimate sanction and were rejected by Janaina. This led to a breakdown in the possibility for a constructive relationship.

Question three dealt with the further use of role theory to provide additional insight into the workings of the family under study through an application of the concept of the natural triad.

The natural triad is an abstraction whose usefulness lies in its ability to characterize common, and according to Morris Freilich, almost universal, triadic relationships in kinship systems (Freilich, 1964: 531). The concept of the natural triad may be applied to Maria's family by describing and analyzing the situations hypothetically in terms of three possible kinship arrangements, the patriarchal, matriarchal, and nuclear family models. Then the actual relationships will be analyzed in terms of their triads to suggest reasons for the particular dysfunctions in role efficacies which they experienced. Freilich has said that a relationship existing among a high status authority figure, HSA, a high status friend, HSF, and a low status subordinate, LSS, can serve the function of providing a means for creating and reducing tensions in the interactions between an authority figure and a subordinate. Personal closeness and emotional support as well as protection from harsh or rigid control, or even injustice, could be given to the LSS by a HSF. As Freilich describes it

the legitimate authority and instrumentally acting person formed one side of a natural grouping or triad, with the HSF, the affective and expressive specialist, and the LSS forming the other sides. Thus a balancing of psychological forces could be achieved in which the growth and guidance of the children, LSS, could be assured and the functioning and success of the family could be realized under the leadership of the HSA.

The dominant model, at least theoretically, in Brazil is the patriarchal one. According to Manuel Berlinck increasing urbanization and industrialization have tended to decrease the influence of the extended family and to break down the patrilocal foundations of the patriarchy (Berlinck, 1969: 43-46). As F. Bessac noted in a paper on the natural triad found in Taiwanese families, during the last 50 years there has been a decrease in the need for and influence of the mother's brother (HSF role), in this patrilineal society. In a well developed, strong patriarchal system the LSS child and the mother would be protected by the mother's brother from the possibly excessive authority of the patriarch. This matrilateral relative is a HSF because he is male and can represent and guard the interests of his sister. In a patrilocal society such as China this

was especially important because the wife was isolated from her own family (Bessac, 1982: 131).

In the family I studied, Paulo was ostensibly the patriarch who fulfilled the customary macho role of director, and arbiter of the family life. One would expect the children to be befriended by João, Maria's brother. In certain ways, and to a limited extent, this was true. For example, he helped Luis get an entry level job but did not promote his advancement when he realized that Luis wouldn't work hard to build a career. At the time of the dissolution of the marriage he did protect Maria's and the children's property, especially since he had made possible the original purchase of his mother, Clarissa's, house and Maria's house next door, through advice and financial help. Paulo was forced to give up his share in these properties and the inheritance of the children was secured. However, João did not have a close affective relationship with the children. As a result of this the tensions produced by the parental pressures for performance and conformity could not effectively be reduced through the use of a HSF from the mother's line. There were tensions created in each of the triads of parents and child which arose out of the parents' views of their proper role in the family

setting. For example, Paulo attempted the authoritarian role, but found it subverted by Maria's usurpation of it. He felt he could not gain his children's respect for his legitimate authority. Perhaps this was because Maria did not respect him and belittled his contributions to the family welfare. They did not obey as he would have liked. He could not force Luis to behave because Maria would act as a HSF and thwart him. However, his disappointment and disapproval of Luis still remained to cause tension. Janaina was not close to her father, while Sandra was. In fact, in Sandra's case Paulo was the HSF and Maria, the HSA. It is interesting to note how the triad could assume different actualizations and emphases in the real situation.

According to Bessac, in Taiwan the need for the HSF role of the mother's brother has declined as the power of the father as patriarch has lessened. If one were to carry this notion of the decrease in relative importance of the mother's brother to its logical conclusion, one could speculate that the reason that João was not a very important person in the lives of the children, as they described their contacts with him, was because the family really never was patriarchal in actual practice. In fact, its patrilineal character was

superficial and weak in comparison to the strong presence of influence from women in the matrilineal branch. As was described above, the coexistence in one family of patriarchal traditions and of norms and expectations associated with a patriarchal culture and the matrilineage of heroism created severe tensions in the family. The conjugal conflict was the result, in some considerable measure, of the ongoing power struggle Maria and Paulo each tried to actualize these conflicting roles.

In order to pursue the line of thought which could analyze Maria's family as a matriarchy and to place an analysis of its natural triads within that framework, it is valuable to review briefly the development of the matrilineal branch. For three generations the women had ruled the family, in the absence of an adequate male authority. Maria's grandfather had been killed, and her father had deserted the family. Paulo, although present, did not successfully fulfill the role of instrumental leader. This had left the women as de facto authority figures. The matrilineal kin were practically unchallenged in their influence on this nuclear family. The fact that the family was essentially matrilineal is also of interest here because this circumstance further diminished the influence of Paulo's family on the

children and also made it difficult for him to get support from his own kin. The newlywed couple, Maria and Paulo lived a mile from Clarissa. They moved closer and then finally came to live right next door to her.

If on the other hand, we view this group as a matriarchy, then Maria would be the HSA and the father's sister or the paternal grandparents could, by symmetrical analogy with the patriarchal structure of the natural triads, become the HSF (see Freilich, 1964: 531). However, these figures either did not exist or were not present. So again tensions between HSA and LSS were not reduced. For example, Maria's pressures on her children to get careers and to marry well were not softened or mediated very well, even by maternal aunts, much less paternal relatives. Although the children recalled their aunt Teresa fondly, Sandra remembered too how Teresa, her mother, and her grandmother had exerted pressures on her to learn to dress like a lady, to get good grades, and to play the piano. Again Sandra was fortunate to have a friend in her father, but Luis and Janaina did not fare so well.

It is possible to analyze this family emphasizing the nuclearity of its structure. Certainly, it was

self-contained in living quarters, and both parents worked in non-family related jobs. Following the modern middle class pattern of the wife being employed the family was generally financially independent, although they did accept help from Maria's mother which again pushed it in the direction of matriarchy. In terms of the natural triad this family appeared to differentiate instrumental and expressive roles, as Zelditch suggests, but in a confusing and destructive way (Zelditch, 1955). According to Talcott Parsons, in a nuclear family the father would be expected to be the instrumental figure, and the mother, the expressive (Parsons, 1955). This ascription does not fit this family. However, Jessie Bernard assigns both roles to the mother and describes the father as having little importance to or authority over the children. She adds the idea that "in many homes the mother's wishes control family policies even when these are in opposition to the father's" (Bernard, 1942: 269). The social matrix of this somewhat nuclear family consisted of Brazilian middle class values and strong ties to tradition. This family was also characterized by the existence of the matrilineage of heroism which appeared to be the most influential set of dynamics.

Phillip Slater suggests that in some nuclear families the parents play both instrumental and expressive roles according to the sex of the child and in response to particular situations (Slater, 1961). In this family, however, this was not the result of open, easygoing consensus, but rather a reflection of conflict. For example, the story of Maria's "soft," or expressive, attitude towards Luis in the motorbike incident or of Sandra's feeling of special affinity with her father, or of Janaina's sense of distance from her father, and at times her mother, show that a mix of natural triad roles were enacted by each of the parents.

A comment upon ideas presented by F. Bessac, in his work on the mother's brother in a natural triad in Taiwan shows how abnormal, one might say, was the general tenor of the role enactments of both Paulo and Maria. Bessac says, "in traditional patrilineal Chinese society, the agnatic descent group largely saw itself the conveyor of structure and structural values while cognatic kin including mother's brother saw themselves if possible as conveyers of *communitas*--like values" (Bessac, 1982: 131). If this were a normal patriarchal family one would expect Maria to be lyric and sentimental, i.e., cognatic, and Paulo to be strong and concerned

with ways to organize and advance his family's position, i.e., agnatic. This, however, was Maria's forte, while Paulo had learned from his father to be more of a romantic, thoughtful person.

To summarize then, the meaning of the fact that this family exhibited characteristics of natural triads found in nuclear families as well as those described in the analyses of the family from patriarchal and matriarchal perspectives suggests that the conditions were present for confusion and conflict in role enactments. For example, Luis reacted to both HSA and HSF signals from his mother. He probably was able to manipulate his mother and to play mother and father off against each other. There were no clear goals, rewards, or consequences available to him which could prevent his drift towards inconsequence and hedonism. This analysis is also useful in that it provides a means for understanding how the manipulative and irresponsible behaviors described in the themes could have evolved.

Another important consideration to attend to concerning this matrilineal branch is its development into a matrilineage of heroism. These women were powerful persons who were educated and aggressive well beyond the norms of their times. Maria's grandmother

spoke five languages and became a schoolmistress. Her daughter, abandoned by her husband, moved her children to Rio and forged a career in a male dominated job, the customs service. She became powerful because she had a large network of acquaintances and friends. Maria, too, was better educated than most women of her generation and worked outside the home. I observed her carry out many business transactions normally reserved to men. Underlying all this talent was the dedication and heroic effort to exercise hierarchical control over the children following the model provided their mother, for the sake of their family and to insure that they would have the position and money they deserved. In effect, they became "men."

In short, I suggest that the destructive quality of a large number of the role enactments of these family members may profitably be analyzed by means of natural triads. This is so because the tensions and strains which the family members experienced, based as they were on conflicting patterns of family structures, i.e., patriarchal, matriarchal and nuclear, diminished the likelihood of ways being found to reduce them through normal natural triads. The mutually exclusive and confusing nature of these triads at work in the

family can be seen as a possible contributing cause to the family's dissolution.

Question four asked how one may relate these themes and actions to family role norms in Brazilian society. The important, relevant role norms will be described and the effects of the attempts to enact them will be described first in relation to conjugal conflict and then in regard to generation conflict. The discussion will be at the descriptive level although couched in the anthropological terms of the patriarchal and "matrilineage of heroism" role models.

Conjugal Conflict Viewed Within the Perspective of the Patriarchal Model

The patriarchal model provides for a dominant male head of the household. Women are seen ideally as passive, tractable, gentle, and concerned only with domestic affairs. They are supposed to raise children who will be respectful and obedient, and a credit to the family. They guard their own respectability and also their husband's honor by being sexually monogamous and by protecting the virginity of their daughters. They also work to ensure that their children marry well. The man of the house in the social class of this family is traditionally not supposed to do manual labor, but is

rather supposed to protect the family and represent it to the world. The words of Brazilian clinical psychologist Ofélia Cardoso describe her beliefs about this ideal.

The family structure, with the figures of Father and Mother, is essential. Each one represents a pole of different affect, but, in both, the fundamental feeling is love, in whatever its modalities. The man is the expression of force, of greater security and support; the explicit authority; thus the woman expresses tenderness, comprehension and sacrifice; sacrifice not understood as renunciation of everything; but, by her very constitution, the female organism is indicated for the aptitude of self-sacrifice, that is, to give herself, for other's benefit (Cardoso, 1968: 14).

The matrilineage of heroism model assumes the absence of the male provider. Therefore, this ideal mother takes responsibility for both the roles. Although Paulo was physically present, he was not sufficiently secure and assertive to achieve a truly successful patriarchal role. Neither was he able to move toward a more "modern" view of the ways couples may share in housekeeping and parenting tasks. Maria had hoped not to have to work after marriage. He had hoped for a peaceful, less assertive wife, it seems. Gradually, as she saw him unable to provide material goods sufficient to raise their socio-economic level, she took on the "heroic" role, thus making either the pure patriarchal

model or the modern model impossible for development.

Generation Conflict Viewed Within
the Perspective of the Matrilineage
of Heroism

Several points may be made about Maria's conception and enactment of her role as parent within the matrilineage of heroism. The meaning of the marriage for her, beyond initial romantic attachment, apparently lay in raising their children successfully in the eyes of the world. Her reliance on the traditional reasons for demanding obedience from her children as they began to seek careers and mates, is evident in her words. She thought that all the people in the family had to conform to the norms demanded by upper middle class society. This was so because it was up to her to ensure the continuity of the family's success, especially in her line. The lack of enough money to achieve this easily had to be overcome. No doubt rage and frustration at Paulo for his "inadequacy" helped to create the need for her to control her children, since she could not achieve her goals through him. It is also likely that she, being controlled by the social pressure of the matrilineage of heroism, which she internalized, led her to require conformity to her wishes. If her children and husband rebelled, they became her "enemies." She defined

the family member's roles, and if they did not comply, they were against her. She felt that any measures were justified because she knew best. She was not able to view each of her children's happiness as something that could take place and grow outside of the approval and influence of the family culture. She may never have seen that these two things, i.e., their happiness and the rise of the family economically and socially could be separated. When the children grew older she thought they could be manipulated, even if they could not be controlled. This instrumental view of people and her inability to let her children grow independently led to intense generation conflict. Her attempts at manipulation and control came back to her full-fold in the attitudes and perceptions which her children have of her now. They fear and distrust her views, and are either rebellious or passive in behavior. Although her care and concern were genuine, and although she strove mightily, today their love for her is marred. Unlike her ideal mother, she will never have freely-giving, adult children and her husband around her to honor her in her old age. As Sandra said in a perceptive and poignant moment, "She is the victim of her mother, and she's just like her." As she said this tears streamed down her face.

The following paragraphs describe a major analysis and interpretation of the results in terms of the family's dual models which are seen in relation to broader historical and societal contexts. These are also placed within the framework of the Brazilian, and by inference, the Latin American context. Thus answers to question four are continued and question five is included. There will be a brief introduction to this part.

I believe that this study shows that in this bilateral society there are two accepted role models for legitimate authority in the family. The patriarchal one is more widely accepted. However, if the need arises for the mother to assume leadership, for example, in the case of widowhood or desertion by the father, her power is legitimized and the matrilineage of heroism may be created. In this family, Clarissa's children accepted her authority. But in Maria's case, the presence of the father, who resented her attempts to dominate them, and the children's disobedience caused severe conflict.

The ideas advanced by Carlos Alberto de Medina (see p. 12), are relevant to the conclusion of this study in that he points to the complexity and particularity of the Brazilian family. He states that foreign authors'

attempts to understand the family generally used two polar concepts of the family; the traditional, patriarchal one, and the modern, nuclear family. While it is certainly true that aspects of nuclearity existed in this family, and that vestiges of the older, extended family based on a patriarchy can be seen, I believe that the convergence of the matrilineage of heroism and patriarchal models in one family was of primary importance. The recognition of this phenomena of convergence is important because one might better understand Brazilian families who face crisis and dissolution when one considers the possible coexistence of these two models.

I will first discuss some of the historical and social factors which have influenced the development of families such as the one I studied. The discussion will also include material from Mexican and Latin American sociologists to further broaden the perspective. I will also discuss the likelihood that the matrilineage of heroism model is quite prevalent in Latin American societies.

In order that the insights gained about the role enactments and interactions found within this family may be placed in a larger context of anthropological studies, additional paragraphs will relate them to

findings described in Oscar Lewis's book, Five Families (Lewis, 1959). Material derived from work by Stuart Queen (1974) will also be used.

Mexico and Brazil are the most populous and the most rapidly changing of the Latin American countries. They are closest to the wave of the future. Therefore, a brief examination of material on Brazilian and Mexican families can help to provide a broader perspective on Latin American families caught in social change. The findings may then also be seen as relevant to the general effort of social scientists, especially anthropologists, to understand these phenomena.

In the patriarchal conception one may see idealizations about the proper role of women which are linked to Catholic ideas about the Virgin Mary. She was gentle, unobtrusive, forbearing, and long-suffering. The life of her Son was the most important thing about her. By being this way she came to be loved and revered by all. She became the Queen of Heaven--inviolable and yet approachable through prayer by all men and women.

An additional underlying cultural reality may be seen in the submissive role allotted to women in the Islamic milieu. This, of course, was and is still, part of the whole Mediterranean heritage.

Just as the Christian reverence for the Virgin Mary underlies the European ancestry of Latin America so does the whole complex of women's views of themselves which complement the myths of men's rights to property, to his dominance of economic life, and to power within the family. Ofélia Cardoso, referring to the Brazilian situation, describes the response of one of her clients to her husband's infidelity, "I'm not going to destroy my family, only because he has a weakness which, certainly, will pass in time. A family without a head is nothing" (Cardoso, 1968: 11). Cardoso notes that her client also expressed the sense of isolation and fear a woman may feel whose husband has gone. She quotes, "...a separated woman is worthless...men only come to you to take advantage. They don't feel any responsibility towards a woman whom the husband has abandoned" (Cardoso, 1968: 11). These attitudes reveal the strength of the norms and expectations of a patriarchy which has caused the woman to internalize the goals of the husband's family and to suffer much to preserve and advance its goals. And yet the matrilineage of heroism may arise given certain conditions. In the following paragraphs I will describe some of the historical and present factors which could make the development of a matrilineage of heroism likely.

An opportunity for the matrilineage of heroism to occur can be seen in the historical conditions arising from the age of exploration, the colonization of Latin America and its subsequent development through empire to republic. Men fought, explored, died younger than at present or left forever. Women then undertook to preserve and advance the family in a heroic way. These conditions are still found, although modified by modern phenomena discussed earlier, such as urbanization and job specialization, which place economic and social activities outside the home. For example, a study by the International Center for Research on Women estimates that:

between 25 and 33 percent of all households in the world are headed by women, and that these families constitute a substantial part of the poorest classes of all countries, probably situated in the most grave level of misery (Barroso, 1982: 1).

Oscar Lewis in his book Five Families, mentions the fact that 17% of the married women living in the poor, urban, housing project are without their husbands, which implies that the matrilineage of heroism could be found there (Lewis, 1959: 26).

Lia Fukui, referred to earlier, and Thomas Harblin offer these ideas about the social changes presently affecting the Brazilian family which have a bearing on

this question (Harblin, 1971). They note the results of industrialization, capitalization, urbanization, the increased rate of population growth, inflation, and concurrent slowed economic growth of the late 1970's which surfaced in countless areas of this family's life and by inference in other families. A few examples from my study may suffice to show this. Maria could work outside the home. The youngsters were clearly influenced by the new freer views about marriage, money, freedom, and sexual behavior. Like many other Brazilian youths, they were also excited by modern music, technology, movies, and cultural values. This divergence in the values of the generations, as the sociologists have noted, is an important part of the problems in the Brazilian family, as well as in other Latin American countries (Queen, 1974: 436-444). From an anthropological viewpoint the situation may be characterized as an onslaught on the ability of the family members to enact roles which make possible the fulfillment of their lives. The family bought many things on credit. Paulo moved to the big city, thus cutting many family ties. He held a job in a new communications industry. The rising expectation for material goods and the "consumer" society, and the increasing pressure on their future security caused by inflation were obviously important.

This middle-class family was under strong pressures from the stress of fast-paced social changes and can be seen to evidence stresses which would be typical of other families in Brazil. There were pressures to buy consumer goods, to dress well, to buy schooling, and to travel.

One may also look at Mexican society and see similar changes. In Mexico a trend towards the rationalization and expansion of agriculture in the direction of corporate "agribusiness" causes stresses on and dislocations of traditional kinship structures. Stuart Queen whose book, The Family in Various Cultures, was referred to earlier, describes how the lower classes also experience similar kinds of pressures (Queen, 1974: 436-440). He says that family form and solidarity are weakened when urbanization and oversupplies of cheap labor put the man's ability to fulfill his patriarchal role in jeopardy, as well as tending to force the woman outside the home to work. In Mexico the situation is especially critical because of the increasing mechanization of agriculture primarily in the north. This lowers the demand for field labor and makes small farmers more vulnerable to having their produce priced out of the market. In any case, these kinds of social changes increase the strains on and divisions of the family.

Given this present context of Brazilian life and of the general Latin American scene, questions about the degree of prevalence of the matrilineage of heroism and the nature of it are important. One may ask: How common is the matrilineage of heroism today? Is this power of women unrecognized or is it legitimate? Of course, these are speculative questions, but I will offer some ideas about them which have arisen from the results of the study.

Although the matrilineage of heroism may exist throughout society it is well to note that a distinction can be drawn between the kind of matrilineage of heroism found among the lower classes, where men are often forced by economic circumstances to relinquish the dominant role, and that of women in circumstances similar to Maria's. In her case the heroic acts were not so much concerned with sheer survival, but rather with advancement and with social status. I suggest that among families who have had greater wealth and status such as Maria's or among those that are marginally successful in a class or are at the top of a class and striving to enter the class above, and given a woman who comes from a line of heroic women, that the phenomenon can also occur. The interesting question raised by the study is

the nature of the family patterns that arise when a father is present. Of importance, in this instance is the degree to which he lives in the patriarchal manner. It seems likely that conflict between the conjugal partners will be intense if questions of dominance and of the fulfillment of the marriage roles described by Nye (see p. 20) are not worked out satisfactorily. A case in point is Oscar Lewis's description of the Castro family. They are a nouveau riche, Mexican family, and the father, David, pursues the macho life, keeping a mistress and controlling his wife through physical violence and the withholding of money. Isabel, the wife, is full of barely suppressed rage at her husband. The children are the pawns in the intense conjugal conflict (Lewis, 1959: 270-318). Stuart Queen describes the situation aptly when he says:

the asymmetrical nature of the husband's role, with his prerogative to express himself personally, socially, and sexually in the community at large, while the wife must stay at home, mind the family, and serve the husband in all his needs, gives rise to a sense of injustice on the part of the female--particularly in a world society where modernity increasingly prescribes equality of the sexes. The enshrinement of womanhood clashes with the particularity and individuality of each wife as a person with human needs (Queen, 1974: 438).

Maria exhibited some anger and frustration at Paulo because she felt he did not make enough money or take burdens from her shoulders, burdens of leadership and responsibility for advancing the family. However, Maria was a highly competent person, intelligent, good-looking, educated and dynamic. Isabel was good-looking, but that was all. It would seem that in order for a matrilineage of heroism to exist in a marriage with a husband present, even if he is not fulfilling his roles as father and husband well, as David surely was not, the woman must be truly exceptional in drive and abilities.

Finally, when one looks at the multifarious ways in which couples express their personalities in terms of role norms and at how they adjust to each other within their particular society and culture, one may say that the phenomenon of the matrilineage of heroism could be very common at all levels of Latin American society. It is difficult to assess its prevalence because of the wide variation in families and cultures (although they are similar at the macrolevel). Also the woman's dominance is not given open legitimization. Only if the husband is absent can a matrilineage of heroism develop and be recognized as valuable. Then it can take its place as an accepted pattern of kinship. In cases

such as the family I studied, the existence of the dual models can lead instead to crisis and dissolution. Therefore, the use of this concept is a fruitful one for those wishing to understand Latin American families.

Implications of the Study

There are two kinds of implications one may mention, the first, practical, and the second theoretical. The first requires the communication of the conclusions of this study to workers in the field of family social services. They should become aware that family conflicts they observe may ensue from the dysfunctional role enactments which characterized the family I studied. The coexistence of the matrilineage of heroism and patriarchal models should be seen as a useful analytical perspective or tool. Then the workers could take steps to help the family members develop more constructive and mutually supportive roles and expectations of each other.

The theoretical questions raised by the study are numerous. A couple will be mentioned here. There is a need for further research which pays strong attention to the continuing great importance of the family in Brazilian society, especially in these times of social upheaval.

Although I have said that the matrilineage of heroism probably exists in other countries under similar conditions, much is yet to be learned about how other families may work through the coexistence problem with more positive results. Further research needs to be done to discover what is actually occurring, given the broad diversity of Brazilian family life. In a sense, theoretical work needs to be done to redefine the ways that children and parents can develop new patterns of family interaction which integrate the new and old roles in a more harmonious way.

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